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OCTOBER, 1887.

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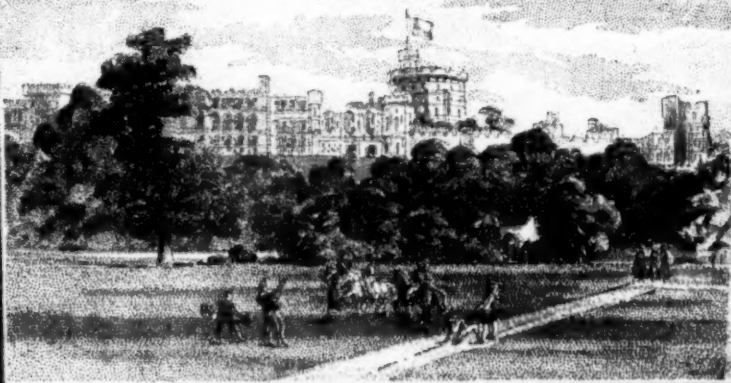
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414	1849	35	2000	0	0	3200	0	0	19300	1867	35	1000	0	0	1255	0	0
809	1851	49	200	0	0	312	0	0	22381	1869	29	1000	0	0	1225	0	0
1587	1853	41	1000	0	0	1520	0	0	24014	1871	43	1000	0	0	1195	0	0
2432	1855	34	1000	0	0	1480	0	0	26931	1873	26	500	0	0	582	10	0
4008	1857	54	200	0	0	288	0	0	28856	1875	41	5000	0	0	5675	0	0
5477	1859	39	300	0	0	420	0	0	31393	1877	17	300	0	0	331	10	0
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19	7	3	8	4	0	6	3	0	0	2	9	6
20	7	6	7	4	2	3	3	1	3	2	10	6
25	7	9	6	4	3	11	3	2	6	2	11	8
25	8	2	10	4	12	3	3	9	0	2	17	2
30	9	0	0	5	1	6	3	15	11	3	3	0
...

Age.	5 Annual Payments.			10 Annual Payments.			15 Annual Payments.			20 Annual Payments.		
	Premium.			Premium.			Premium.			Premium.		
35	£	s	d.	£	s	d.	£	s	d.	£	s	d.
40	9	16	4	5	11	0	4	3	2	3	9	5
45	10	14	6	6	1	5	4	11	6	3	16	10
50	11	15	10	6	14	4	5	1	9	4	6	4
55	13	0	3	7	9	10	5	14	11	4	18	7
60	14	7	0	8	7	8	6	11	5	5	14	2
65	15	19	0	9	11	6	7	12	8	6	15	6

EXAMPLE.

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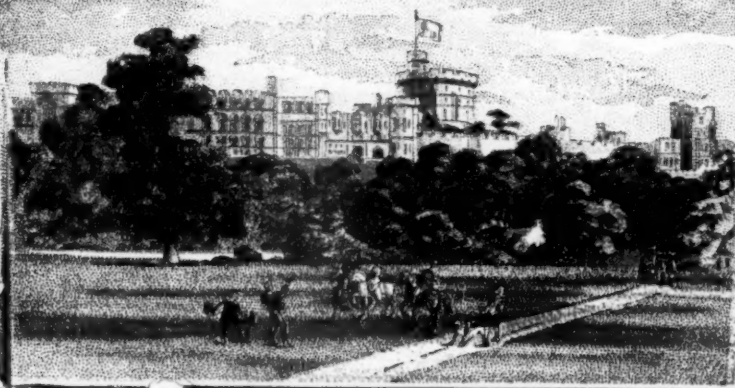
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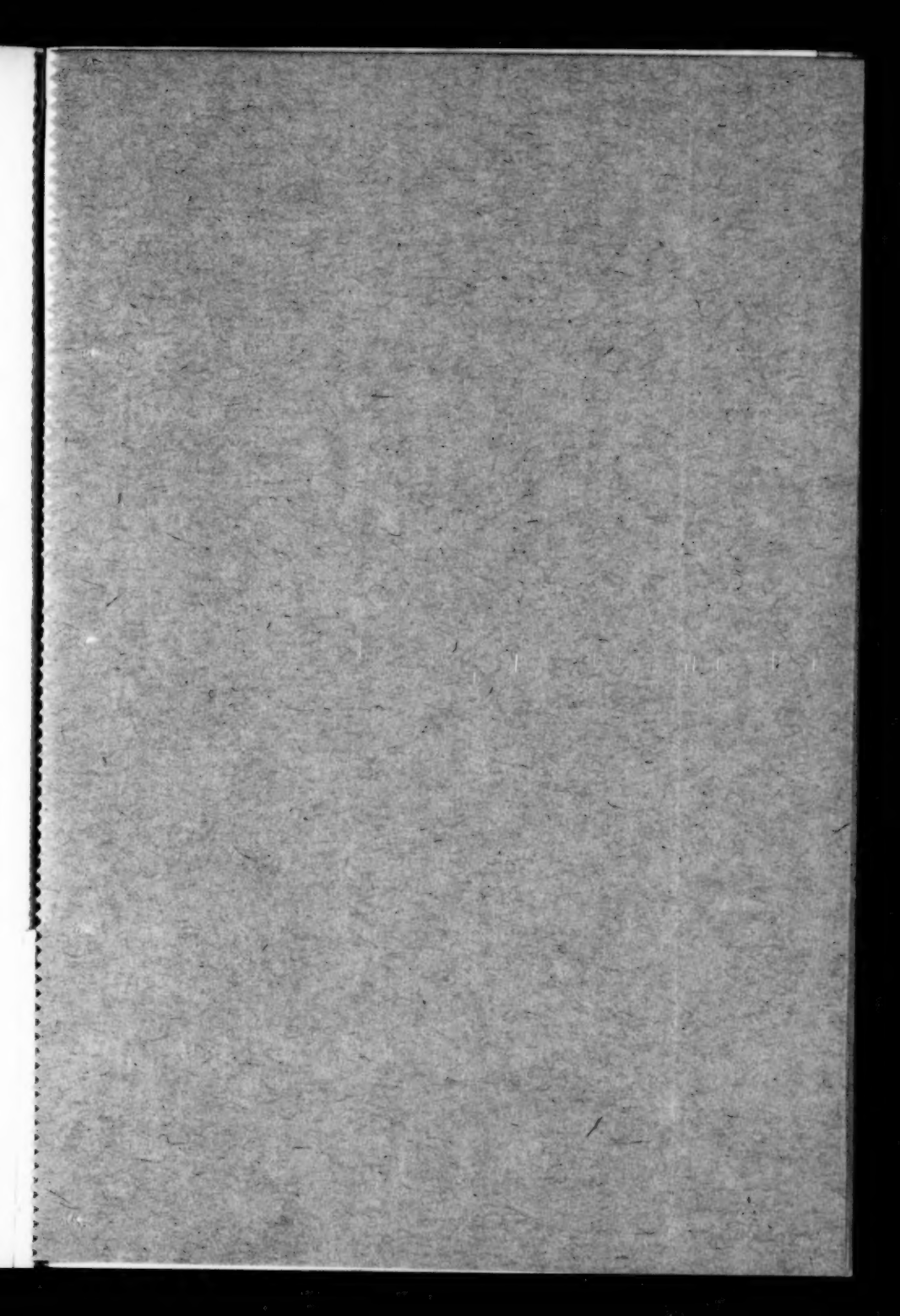
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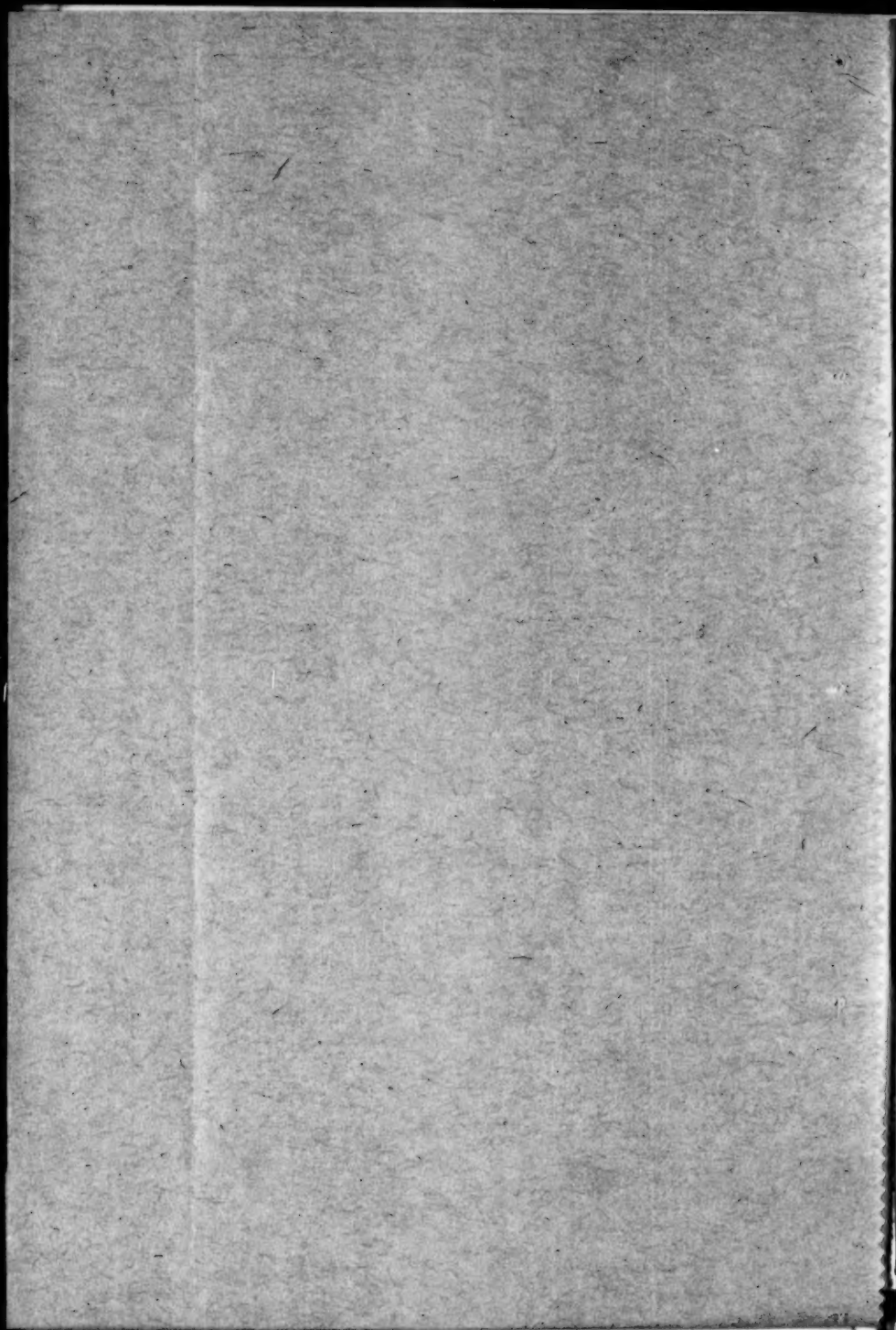
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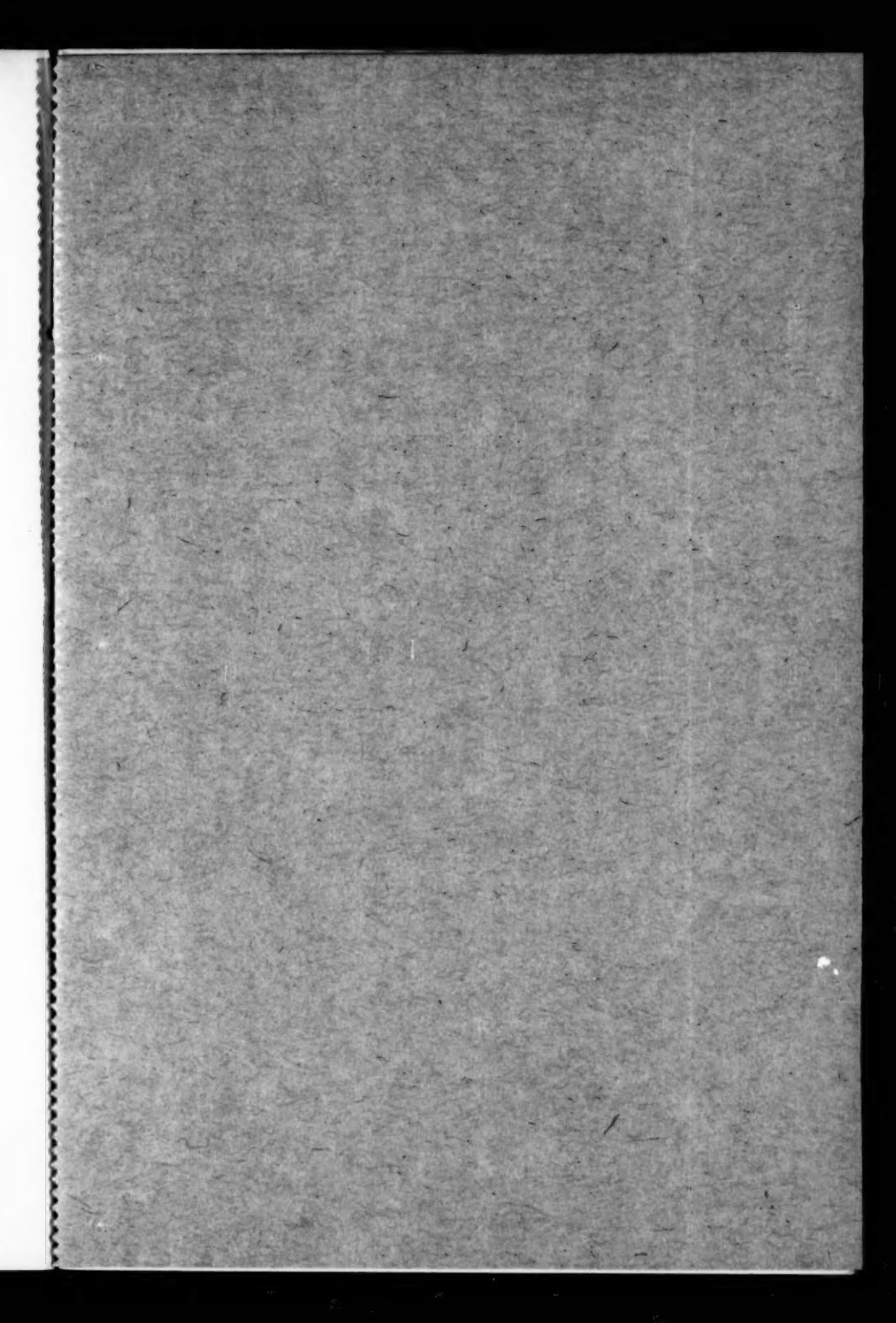
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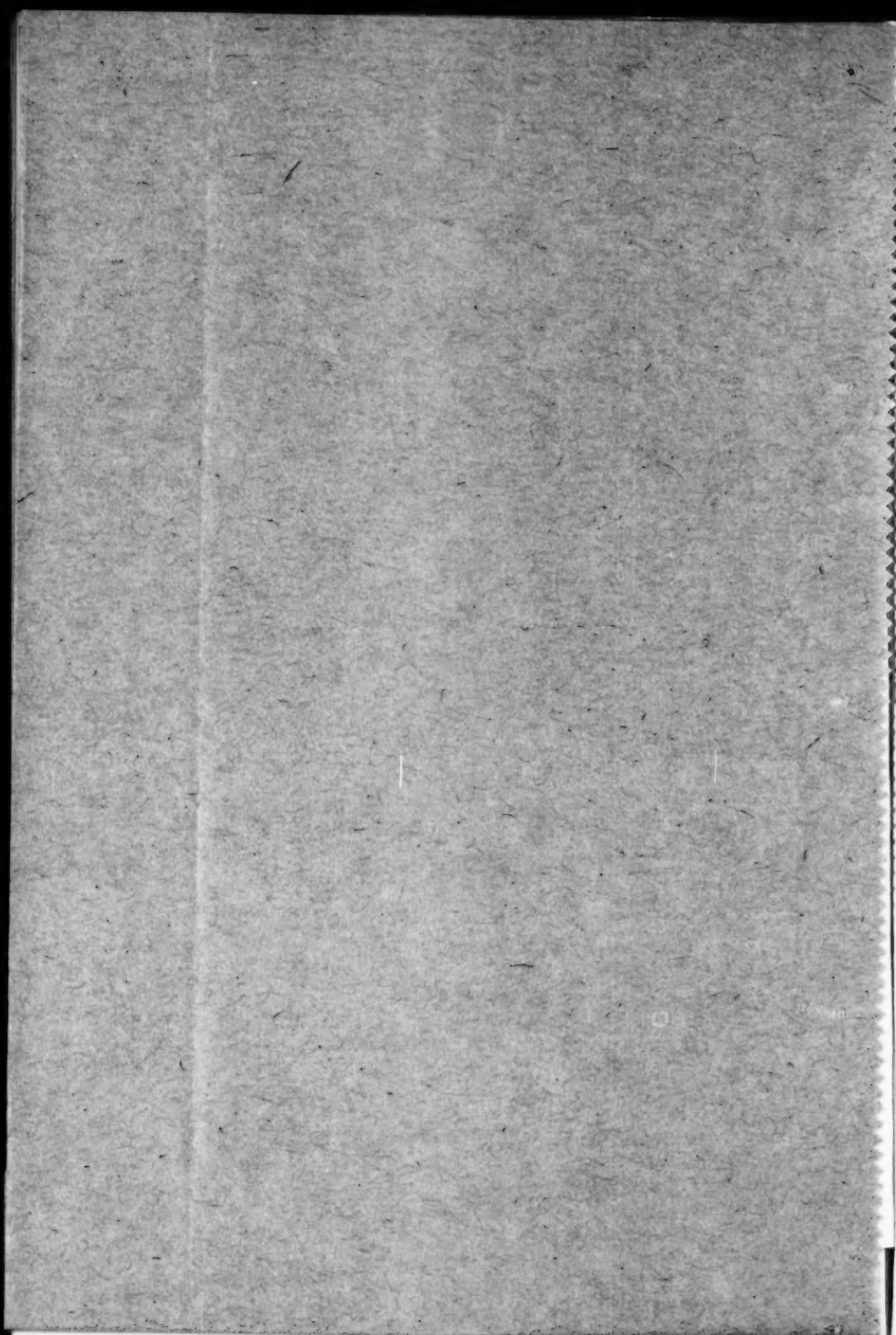
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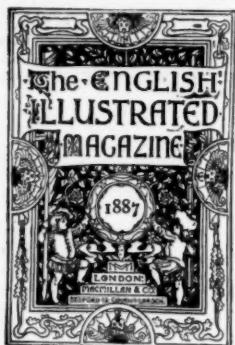
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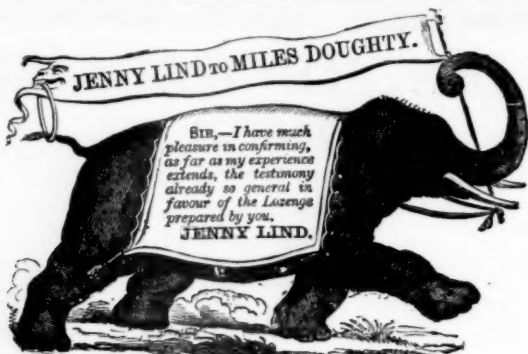
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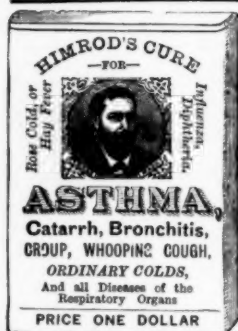
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THE PEELITES.

GREVILLE'S JOURNAL has revived the memory of the Peelites; and an article appeared the other day, by the survivor and the most renowned of the group, in which, as a set of men taking their own course and remaining outside the regular parties, they were designated as "a public nuisance." One cannot help surmising that they incurred this severe judgment in some measure by their similarity to a set of public men who at the present time are so misguided as to refuse at the call of a party leader to say what they think false and to do what they think wrong. It is the car of the Caucas Juggernaut rolling backwards over political history.

It happened that, though I never was in public life, I saw a good deal of some of the Peelites, and from them heard about the rest more than after the lapse of many years I can remember. The acquaintance of the Duke of Newcastle I made through our common tutor at Eton, Edward Coleridge, who died the other day, and of whom, amidst the flood of biography, I wonder no memoir has appeared. Coleridge was the Arnold of Eton. He was a very Eton Arnold, it is true; and as he was not headmaster, but only an assistant, his sphere was rather his own pupil-room than the school. But in that sphere, and in his own way, he did for the very dry bones of education at Eton

what Arnold did at Rugby. "My Tutor" was greatly beloved, as he deserved to be, by all his pupils, and the connection always remained a bond. It drew together even those who, like the Duke and myself, had not been contemporaries at Eton.

The Duke was not a great statesman, perhaps he was not even a great administrator, for though he was a good man of business and devoted to work, he wore himself out with details which he ought to have left to subordinates; and I fancy he had not the gift of choosing his subordinates very well. The breakdown in the Crimea, however, was not his fault; but the fault of a long disused and rusty machine which he was just getting into order when the Government fell. Though a man of strong feelings and affections, he lacked imagination, and perhaps owed partly to that defect the unhappiness which befell him in his married life. He certainly owed to it a misunderstanding with Seward, one of whose maladroit jests he took in earnest and afterwards recalled at a time when the relations between the governments had become strained. But he was a thoroughly upright, high-minded, and patriotic gentleman, who kept his soul above his rank, and devoted himself to the service of the State; while the fortitude with which he bore accumulated misfortune and torturing disease would have touched

any heart, as it did mine. He showed, it seemed to me, remarkable tact and temper in presiding over the Education Commission, of which I was a member, and which was made up of men chosen as representatives of different opinions on a burning question. In that respect, at all events, he would not have been a bad head of a government. His colleagues would also have felt that they could thoroughly trust his honour. It was in an unlucky hour, and at the bidding of an ill-starred ambition, that he forsook the Colonial Office for the Ministry of War. As a Colonial Minister he was successful in his own way, which was that of a decided Imperialist, though he was too good-natured ever to quarrel with a friend who wrote in support of the opposite view. His Liberal tendencies did not fail to bring upon him the wrath of his father, who had greatly encumbered the estate by reckless purchases of territorial influence for the purpose of upholding ultra-Toryism, and had prepared for himself a place among the most hapless victims of the irony of fate by opening the door of the House of Commons to Mr. Gladstone.

Cardwell, whose acquaintance I made at first through the Duke, always seemed to me the model of a public servant. He was the most typical pupil, as well as one of the warmest adherents, of Peel, who did his best to train statesmen for the country, and exacted, as the title to promotion, the conscientious industry and thorough devotion to the public service of which he was himself the grand example. Cardwell, like Peel, was dry, and, like Peel, somewhat stiff and formal: there was nothing about him brilliant, or impressive to any one who was not impressed by duty. He was not and never could have been a party leader: he had not the fire, the magnetism, the eloquence, or the skill as a tactician. It did not seem to me that he ever scanned the political field for strategical purposes as party leaders do. He was content to do the busi-

ness and solve the question of the hour. The question of the hour he solved by an honest sort of opportunism, rather than on any very broad principle, or with reference to any far-reaching policy. Not only was he unqualified to be a party leader, but he was an indifferent partisan: his mind was too fair, and his judgment was too cool. On the other hand, he was a true comrade, a fast friend, and not a bad hater of the enemies of his friends. I really believe that this is the right way of stating the case, and that Cardwell was free from rancour. I know that some whose opinion is of weight thought him unjust to opponents. It is difficult for a gladiator in such an arena as party politics to be perfectly just; but I must say that I never heard Cardwell speak bitterly of mere difference of opinion or of anything but what he sincerely believed to be dishonest. He was cautious, perhaps reticent to a fault. Without being eloquent, he was a good and convincing speaker in Peel's manner, and particularly clear in exposition; yet he never spoke if he could help it, and more than once he rehearsed to me, in substance, speeches which he was going to make, but when the time came did not make. It was as an administrator and practical legislator that he was really great. While others talked and manoeuvred for power he did an immense amount of work, and of the best quality, for the nation. His great achievements and monuments are the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, which is still the code of our Mercantile Marine, and the transformation of the army from an unprofessional and unscientific to a professional and scientific force. Peel made it a point of honour so carefully to prepare his Bills that they should pass with little amendment, and in this, as in other respects, Cardwell was a faithful pupil. The Merchant Shipping Bill with its five hundred and forty-eight sections passed through Committee at a single sitting—a curious contrast to a Franchise Act,

the work of the opposite school, which, when it finally became law, retained of the original Bill scarcely anything but the preamble! The transformation of the army in face of all the prejudices and opposition of the men of the old school was probably as heavy a piece of work as ever fell to the lot of a British legislator. It broke Cardwell down and brought on the sad malady which closed his working days. The strongest testimony is borne, by those who are best qualified to judge, to the temper and patience as well as to the ability and the power of mastering details displayed in the conduct of the business. Testimony equally strong is borne to the display of the same qualities in other departments, notably in the Board of Trade. As Colonial Secretary he had to deal, amidst a tornado of public excitement, with the question of the disturbances in Jamaica and of Governor Eyre. The case of Jamaica he was generally allowed to have settled well, though in the case of Governor Eyre it was impossible to unite the suffrages of those who regarded the Governor as a hero with the suffrages of those who regarded him not only as the hateful instrument of a cruel panic but as the dastardly murderer of his personal enemy, Gordon. To Cardwell is due, if not the initiative, the execution, of a great change in Colonial policy; for he it was who, by practically insisting that the Colonies should pay for troops maintained in them, inaugurated self-defence, which was a long step towards Colonial independence. Cardwell was no eye-server: he did the work of his office thoroughly and faithfully without any thought of self-display or of the figure which he was to make before the House of Commons; and one could not help thinking how absurd was the party system which compelled the country to deprive itself of such a departmental administrator because the party to which he belonged had been defeated on some legislative question totally unconnected with the business

of his department. Albeit, as has already been said, no party leader or organiser of political forces, Cardwell in council, though quiet, was strong, and was able even to control the course of errant and flaming bodies which are now setting the political firmament on fire. Such at least was the impression which I formed when I was living in the Peelite circle. I am glad to see that a memoir of Cardwell is in hand: it will tell no exciting story, but it will hold a mirror up to public duty. One who could have told the biographer much and would have told it with affectionate eagerness is no more. Though everywhere but in his home Cardwell seemed rather cold, his wife could not live when he was gone. Her remaining days, in fact, were almost spent in lingering round his grave.

I passed a summer with Cardwell in the Phoenix Park when he was Secretary for Ireland, and there had the advantage both of observing Irish government and of hearing Lord O'Hagan, Sir Alexander Macdonald, Dr. Russell, and other wise and patriotic Irishmen on the Irish Question. I call Sir Alexander Macdonald an Irishman, for though he was not a native of Ireland, no man could be more thoroughly identified with the country in heart, while he remained, in his great work of organising national education, happily independent as "a foreigner" of Irish factions. Being in the Cabinet Cardwell was the real minister; while Lord Carlisle, who was Lord-Lieutenant, was happy in displaying his admirable social qualities, making the after-dinner speeches in which, thanks to his unique flow of sincere and heartfelt flummery, he excelled all mankind, and in keeping the score at cricket. The general impression, I believe, was that Cardwell had failed as an Irish Secretary. It is certain that he was the reverse of the typical Irishman, and equally certain that he disliked the post and was glad to escape from it to the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster. But I

do not believe that he failed. His patience, justice, industry, and impartiality were, at all events, appreciated by the best Irishmen: my inquiries led me to believe that they were appreciated by the people at large, and I came away disabused of the superstitious belief that a sort of roystering misrule is the only thing that will go down with the Irish. That there is a tendency to that sort of thing in the Irish character is too true, but it calls for correction, not for indulgence. The chief Irish difficulty in those days was National Education, in dealing with which, however, the Government, on condition of observing all the forms of respect to the hierarchy, received the practical support of a number of Liberal Roman Catholics. With regard to land, Cardwell's principle of legislation was the direct opposite of that which is now in fashion. He framed an Act reducing all tenure to contract. But at all events he saw his way, which is more than can be confidently said for those who are now abetting an agitation against the settlement made and pronounced final by themselves a few years ago.

Sidney Herbert was the model of a high-bred English gentleman in public life. To the elevation of his character, fully as much as to his powers of mind, he owed his high position, his designation as a Prime Minister that was to be, and the tears which England shed over his early grave. He had the advantage of rank and wealth: not only of rank and wealth, but of historic rank and of wealth associated with the poetry of Wilton. Of aristocracy he was the very flower. The special qualities of leadership he can hardly be said to have shown, and though he administered the War Office well, I should not suppose that his power of work rivalled that which was possessed by some of his associates. He had, however, beneath a quiet bearing, and a slight appearance of aristocratic listlessness, plenty of courage and not a little force of cha-

racter. Disraeli, who hated him as Peel's "gentleman," attacked him bitterly and found that he had much better have let him alone. "If a man wishes to see humiliation let him look there," said Sidney Herbert, with pointed finger beneath which Disraeli cowered, when the latter had thrown over Protection. Sidney Herbert was a High Churchman, and Wilton Church shows that the aesthetic element of the school was strong in him. Mr. Gladstone, as all the world knows, was a High Churchman also; so was the Duke of Newcastle; and the combination of political Liberalism with Ritualism may be said to have had its origin in the secession of the Peelites from the Tory party.

Of Lord Canning I saw something in connection with the Oxford University Reform Bill, with which he was charged in the House of Lords, and for the debate on which I was set to cram him. He seemed to me, I confess, slow of apprehension and somewhat puzzleheaded. It was believed that he was sent to India to get him out of the Cabinet where he gave trouble by his opinionativeness; and everybody shuddered, when the Mutiny broke out, at the thought that India was in his hands. Happily for his country the unforeseen emergency called forth unsuspected qualities, and "Clemency Canning" saved England from something worse than the loss of an Empire. His attachment to Peel is an answer to the story infused by Disraeli into Bentinck, and reproduced by Bentinck with characteristic coarseness, of Peel's having "murdered" Canning. But the whole story of Canning's martyrdom is a fable. If anybody intrigued it was Canning himself, who had not a little of the intriguer in his nature.

Lord Dalhousie's government of India and his State Papers relating to it were another proof of Peel's success in forming administrators. This may be said without praising a policy of aggrandisement which jeopardised confidence in British good faith and

moderation—the true palladium of the Empire—and led to the only political insurrection of any consequence which has ever taken place against British rule, that of the peasantry of Oude. The name of Lord Dalhousie as a member of the British Parliament is connected with what has always seemed to me the weakest point in Peel's career, the abandonment, on the eve of the railway-mania, of the control over the construction of railways which Lord Dalhousie had earnestly recommended.

Graham, as well as Cardwell, always seemed to me a striking instance of the weakness of the system which inseparably connects the duty of an administrator with that of a legislator on organic questions. As an administrator he was first-rate. At the beginning of the Crimean War he got the navy with wonderful rapidity into excellent order. He was also as a speaker excellent both in force and clearness on administrative subjects and all subjects within his mental grasp. But on organic questions he was not strong. Public men are seldom the better for having been engaged in revolutions: the wreck of illusions which follows is apt to bring with it loss of faith in principle; and Graham had played a violent part in the revolution of 1832. There was something tortuous in his courses and in his character: a strange timidity appeared to wait on an aspiring ambition. He was always making combinations, the object of which seemed to be to bring the great prize within his reach, and yet he never dared to grasp it. His end was touching. A short time before he had been individually perhaps the most powerful member of the House of Commons. His word was said to be worth fifty votes. Yet he was forgotten in a moment, and, with his mind still full of schemes of aggrandisement, passed from his eventful life to an unnoticed grave.

Of Lord Aberdeen personally I saw nothing. But from what his associ-

ates said in private, as well as from his public conduct, I learned to feel the greatest respect for him. It seemed to me that with him for Foreign Minister England presented herself to other governments as an English gentleman presents himself to his fellows, upright and honourable in all his dealings, careful to maintain his own rights and dignity, and equally careful to respect those of other people. Nobody ever suspected Lord Aberdeen of trickery, of intrigue, or deception of any kind. His despatches bear the marks of perfect straightforwardness and truth. Though Conservative in diplomacy he was not illiberal: he declared for the repeal of the Corn Laws before any of his colleagues, and he never refused his assent to any measure of domestic reform. He it was who, sitting at Wellington's side when the Duke made his fatal declaration against any reform of Parliament, told him that he had undone the party. On the other hand, he was anti-revolutionary, and never conspired or caballed for propagandist objects against the Governments with which he had to deal. He kept for his country all her friends, and never made her an enemy. The net result of the opposite course has been the conversion of Russia from a staunch friend into a deadly enemy; for all Palmerston's meddling and hectoring in Italy would have come to nothing without the intervention of French arms. England is now in her turn assailed by a foreign conspiracy, and the confederates of that conspiracy are able, when she protests, to cast in her teeth her universal interference with the domestic politics of other nations. Unpatriotic, ignoble, and doomed to dishonour when the day of faction is past, are the lips which give utterance to the charge against their country in her hour of distress, but the charge cannot be said to be unfounded. Europe is a commonwealth of nations, each member of which must do its duty to the whole; but to do that duty is one thing, propagandist meddling is another. The chickens

of propagandist meddling have now come home to roost.

Mr. Gladstone does not yet belong to history, and the only part of his career which fell specially under my notice was Oxford University Reform. He opposed inquiry when a Commission was announced by Lord John Russell; but afterwards, as a member of the Coalition Government, he framed what was for that day a drastic and comprehensive measure of reform. In the opinion of those who, like myself, desired to see the universities made national instead of clerical, and modern instead of mediæval, this was a very beneficent "growth." Nobody has a word to say against "growth" provided it is spontaneous, not regulated by the exigencies of the party game, and provided that people who fail to grow at the same rate are not consigned to Gehenna as "renegades," "apostates," and "deserters." It was impossible to be brought into contact with Mr. Gladstone even in so slight a way without being made sensible of his immense powers of work, of mastering and marshalling details, of framing a comprehensive measure and of carrying it against opposition in the House of Commons. I also saw and appreciated his combative energy. The Bill had been miserably mauled in the Commons by Disraeli with the aid of some misguided Radicals. When it got to the Lords I was placed under the steps of the throne to be at hand if information on details was needed by those in charge of the Bill. The House seemed very full, but the Duke of Newcastle came to me and said that he did not believe Lord Derby intended to venture on a real opposition to the Bill as there had not been a strong whip on the Conservative side. "In that case," I said, "what hinders you from reversing here the amendments which have been carried against you in the Commons?" A conference was held in the library to consider this suggestion; but Lord Russell, the leader of the Commons, peremptorily

vetoed it on the ground of prudence. Mr. Gladstone was confined to his room by illness; but in compliance with my earnest prayer the question was referred to him. Next day the signal for battle was hung out, and I had the great satisfaction of looking on while, by a series of divisions in Committee, the Commons' amendments were reversed and the Bill was restored to a workable state. Disraeli, who had come over from the Commons, stood beside me, with displeasure visible in his generally impassive face. When the Bill went back to the Commons the Opposition was out of town, and the Bill with the Lords' amendments got safely through.

These are not points of merely biographical interest. The rupture between Peel and his party has always seemed to me one of the most disastrous events in the political history of England. To the Conservatives it was the beginning of a departure from the ways of principle, and of wandering under the guidance of personal ambition in ways which were not those of principle and which could lead to nothing in the end but humiliation and ruin. But the fate of a party would have signified little. Peel had subdued revolution and turned it into administrative reform. The name Conservative was his invention, and it was the apt symbol of the transmutation. He had succeeded in doing this by his vast administrative qualities, his immense knowledge of public business, and the confidence which his prudence, his integrity, his patriotism, his equal regard for all the great interests of the country inspired, while as a great landowner whose wealth had been made in trade, he stood in an equally favourable relation to both the great interests. His command of Parliament was complete. He was also the cynosure of European Conservatism, which in all countries, but particularly in France, felt the shock of his fall. Whether his ascendancy was due to genius or not, is perhaps a question of words. It was not due to

clap-trap, intrigue, or legerdemain, any more than it was due to demagogic appeals to the spirit of revolution. England perhaps never had been so well governed before, and she has certainly never been so well governed since as she was during the years 1841-46; though looking back we see, as the ship of the Peel ministry sweeps along with swelling sails, the sunken rock of the Corn Law on which it can scarcely escape running. Peel had formed a splendid staff; and whether in forming it he had been guided by an instinctive power of discerning capacity, or rather by a generous, unselfish, and comprehensive willingness to recognise distinction even in men little congenial to himself, the result was equally good for the country. To that staff, had all gone well, he might have transmitted power; and the course of English politics down to the present time might have been one of administrative reform and equitable progress. But when Peel fell, Conservatism fell with him, and by degrees revolution broke out again. The leaders of faction in their struggle for power soon began to bid against each other for popularity by extensions of the franchise without any revision of the Constitution; and the result has been the sudden transfer of supreme power from intelligence to ignorance, from public reason to popular passion, with consequences which have already brought the nation to the verge of dissolution. Tory-democracy, by which Conservatism was immediately supplanted, was, and has shown itself to be, not less demagogic and revolutionary in its nature than Radicalism; while in absurdity, as an attempt to combine Jacobitism with Jacobinism, it has no peer among political platforms. It is an anachronistic plagiarism from the Jacobite intriguers who appealed to the mob in the hope of upsetting the Hanoverian dynasty.

About the fatal quarrel between Peel and his party enough has been written, at all events till Peel's Life, which seems to be spell-bound, shall

be before us. What it will not be easy to discover is that history is evidence in favour of the system of party. Far easier will it be to discover evidence in favour of the position that the motives and agencies of faction and its leaders, if they are less palpably corrupt than they were in the last century, are not essentially purer or less opposed to the public good. In the unnatural combination by which a government, which unquestionably was doing what was best for the people, was overthrown, self-interest of the narrowest kind and the most unscrupulous intrigue joined hands with faction the most profligate. It always seemed to me strange that Mr. Bright and Cobden should have voted with the Whigs and the Protectionists on that occasion: they must have known that they were really voting not on the Coercion Bill but on the Corn Law. The conduct of the aristocratic leaders of the Whig opposition in suddenly declaring for the total repeal of the Corn Laws, simply in order to embarrass the Government, was not a whit higher than that of the almost professedly unprincipled adventurer who seized his personal opportunity. After voting against the Coercion Bill they, a few months later, brought in a Coercion Bill themselves. Yet these men were not gutter-politicians from New York: they had been reared under what was supposed to be the ancestral-roof of patriotism and honour. Such is the training and such the morality of party!

Peel carried with him into banishment the whole of his staff except Lord Derby, whose character, both on the political and the sporting turf, has been drawn with a friendly but decisive pencil by Greville; Thesiger, who lived to be kicked out of the Chancellorship by Disraeli; and a few subalterns who saw their opportunity in the split which deprived the party of its leaders. He carried with him also the regret of the best patriots and the unbounded sympathy of the people.

Nor in losing place did he lose power. He remained arbiter of parties in the House of Commons: the Whig Government, weak in administrative ability and with little claim to popularity or confidence, subsisted largely by his protection, and on any great question his voice would have been almost decisive. Nor could anything have prevented his restoration to power at the first crisis had he lived and been minded to return. Carlyle's diagnosis of the national feeling on that point, though rudely picturesque, was correct; and this is a fact which believers in the excellence and necessity of the party system will do well to take into account.

Peel, however, did not himself wish to return to power. He was physically much exhausted by a life of enormous labour, and deeply wounded at heart by the quarrel with his friends. He remained aloof, and neither took any step to form a party nor encouraged those who would have taken such steps for him. His lieutenants, therefore, while he lived, remained unattached and out of office, showing their ability in general parliamentary business and in other lines. They steadily supported Free Trade in all the applications of the principle, notably in regard to the repeal of the Navigation Laws. After Peel's death they gravitated towards the Whigs, their difference from whom was little more than that of Liberal Conservatives from Conservative Liberals: indeed, the Peelites were more democratic in their sympathies than the Whigs. Mr. Gladstone's statement that he spoke of Peelism to Lord Derby as "a public nuisance" naturally suggests the surmise that he was himself at the time looking in Lord Derby's direction, and that had the place of Conservative leader in the House of Commons at that time been open he might now be filling it instead of commanding the army in which march Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Healy and Dr. Tanner. At last Derbyism, in other words Protectionism without

Protection, having failed, and the Whigs being too weak to form a Government by themselves, the combination of Whigs and Peelites, with a Radical element, represented by Sir William Molesworth, took place, and a Government on a broad basis was formed. The cuckoo-cry of coalition was at once revived. "England does not love coalitions," said a political moralist who had himself persuaded the Tories to coalesce with the Whigs and Radicals against the third reading of Peel's Coercion Bill, after voting for the second reading, in order to turn out the Peel Government, and who was afterwards to play that game over again for the purpose of turning out Lord Palmerston's Government on the Conspiracy Bill. The coalition of Fox and North, of which we are always reminded by the purists of party, was a junction of the leaders of two great borough-mongering interests, on the morrow of scandalous quarrels and recriminations, for objects generally believed to be selfish and even corrupt. The weakness of the Aberdeen Government lay, not in its having been formed without regard to party, but in its consisting of men who had been too long trained under the influence of party, and were too thoroughly steeped in its spirit to co-operate heartily and in good faith with men of a different party from their own. The Whigs from the outset, though officially cordial, betrayed jealousy of their Peelite colleagues; they thought too much about their sacrifice, and the quarrel between Russell and Palmerston was not extinct. Lord Aberdeen, whose fairness of mind, transparent honesty, and perfect unselfishness, combined with his eminence in his own department, would have made him an excellent head of a united Ministry, was ill-suited to play the part of *Æolus* in a Cave of the Winds. Still, the Coalition Cabinet might have been held together and governed the country very well had it not been for the quarrel with Russia, which brought on a fatal collision between

the antagonistic policies of Aberdeen and Palmerston. It would be well for the reputation of the Peelites, as well as for the interests of the country, if that day could be blotted out of history; for it is hard to believe that any Peelite went with a perfectly clear conscience into the Crimean War. The possible exception is the Duke of Newcastle, who, at all events, soon caught the war-fever to an almost extravagant extent. Nicholas, it is true, was a Muscovite, and if not "a giant liar," as he is called in "*Maud*" was little scrupulous on the point of veracity; but he was a good friend of England, and it seems to be now pretty generally allowed that there was in our dispute with him no knot which diplomacy might not very well have untied, or which needed to be cut with the sword. War was from the beginning the desire of three men, Louis Napoleon, Palmerston, and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Louis Napoleon wanted the military glory which was indispensable to a Napoleonic throne, and the assured place among the royalties of Europe which he gained by forming an intimate relation with our Court. The author of the *Coup d'Etat* may have been in some ways a man of merit and not without good intentions, but he was a brigand: the men about him were brigands; and they had already opened their game with the intrigue and quarrel about the Holy Places which were so dear to these eminent representatives of Christendom. Palmerston was animated by the same insensate Russophobia which had led him into the disastrous invasion of Afghanistan: at the same time, he wanted to get the conduct of foreign affairs out of the hands of Lord Aberdeen—the object of his life-long antagonism—and into his own. What his notions were of loyalty to colleagues we know from the Memoirs of Lord Malmesbury, where we find Palmerston, by the lips of his wife, thanking the enemy, and promising to reward them with future support, for their kindness in opposing

a measure brought forward by his political associates. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was an almost frantic enemy of Russia on personal as well as on diplomatic grounds: he never concealed the violence of his feelings, and when the first shot was fired shouted, "Thank God, that is war!" That he morally contravened the instructions of his Government cannot be doubted, though he can hardly be said to have betrayed it when his sentiments were so undisguised and his language so unguarded. These three men, acting in tacit concert, even though there was no actual understanding among them, drew the Cabinet to the brink, and at last over the brink of war. A speech made by Lord Russell at Greenock, also contributed greatly to the difficulties of the Prime Minister, who was labouring to preserve peace. In the meantime the Palmerstonian press, working on the blind pugnacity and ignorant suspicion of the people, had lashed the country into fury; while the Opposition did not fail to play what, under the party system, must be admitted to be its constitutional and legitimate, though unpatriotic and detestable, part. Lord Aberdeen's situation was desperate, nor would his resignation have averted the war: foreign affairs would have passed into the hands of Palmerston with public feeling at the boiling-point. Yet it is deplorable that Lord Aberdeen, or any of his colleagues who thought as he did, should have become responsible for that war. There is a partial analogy between his case and that of Walpole, who allowed himself to be forced against his judgment into the war with Spain, persuading himself that as war there must be, it was better he should keep control of it; though the selfish love of power which mingled with Walpole's public motives had no place in the heart of Lord Aberdeen. Those who go into a war with manifest reluctance are naturally suspected of half-heartedness in waging it. In the case of Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues no suspicion could be

more unjust. They undoubtedly did their very best, and Palmerston himself could not have been more passionately desirous of victory than the Duke of Newcastle. Yet so chivalrous and patriotic a man as Sidney Herbert, because he had some Russian connection, was believed to be standing in the way of an attack on the great Russian arsenal and storehouse at Odessa. If anybody stood in the way of an attack on Odessa it was more likely our faithful ally, the Emperor of the French. The Government had at the same time to contend with the inefficiency of the War Office, largely due to the long decrepitude of the Duke of Wellington; and just as things were being brought into working order, and the state of the British army was beginning to compare favourably with that of the French in the field, the crash in Parliament came. Roebuck's vote of censure in the shape of a motion for inquiry was brought forward: Lord Russell, in an evil hour for his own reputation, withdrew, leaving his colleagues under fire; and the Aberdeen Government ended in disaster.

In their relations to the war the Peelites were altogether unfortunate. If it is difficult to justify their entrance, it is not less difficult to justify the withdrawal of such of them as had remained in the Government when it was reconstructed under Palmerston. Their avowed ground was that Palmerston had pledged himself to resist the inquiry for which Roebuck had moved, and that by submitting to it he had failed to redeem his pledge. But he had done all that was in his power to get rid of the inquiry, and he could not be expected to run his Government, on the morrow of its formation, full upon a rock. Public interest in the inquiry was sure soon to be lost, as it was, in the excitement of the war. Nor was it to be expected that the nation, having expended so much blood and money, would be content to make peace before substantial results had been attained.

That the Greeks would have been willing to raise the siege of Troy if the Trojans would have given up Helen and her treasures, which were the original cause of the war, might be true, but this was hardly a satisfactory precedent. Cardwell certainly differed in judgment from his colleagues; and it will be a difficult question for his biographer to determine whether he was right in putting his loyalty to his friends above the duty of standing by the Government in the middle of a war. His disinterestedness cannot be impeached, for he declined the Chancellorship of the Exchequer which Palmerston pressed him to accept, and which, as it was the office of the highest distinction in his own line, he would certainly have liked to hold.

The Aberdeen Government, in spite of the war, was not barren of legislative and administrative improvements: among other things it carried University Reform. More might have been done in that way had not the spare energies of the Government been wasted on the Franchise Bill which the Whigs insisted on introducing and which proved abortive, unhappily for the time only.

From a position of ostensibly friendly secession the Peelites drifted into one of quasi-opposition. About their last appearance on the scene as a distinct connection was when they helped to carry the vote of censure on Palmerston for his policy in China. Cardwell lost his seat in the election which ensued, in which Palmerston was borne to victory fully as much by the recollection of the Crimean War as by sympathy with his violent courses in China. In this case the Peelites were acting in accordance with their best traditions and were unquestionably in the right. Lord Elgin's Diary has completely settled that question. After the final reconciliation of the surviving Peelites with Palmerston and their accession to his Ministry Peelism no longer existed. But if we trace the annals of administrative reform and

of the practical and permanent legislation which fulfils the ends not of the party game but of good government, to whatever department we look—the financial, the commercial, the legal, the military, the naval, the Colonial or the Indian—we shall find that a special debt is owed to the conscientious industry, mastery of detail, and devotion to business which characterised the school of statesmen bred under Peel. The fiscal system is always admitted to be specially the work of the most distinguished of them; and the general meed of praise bestowed on it may be recorded without altogether suppressing an individual doubt whether a system entirely dependent on the undiminished consumption of a few articles, wholly inelastic and constantly requiring the rude and perilous supplement of an income-tax, which Peel himself introduced merely to shore up the edifice pending the result of a great experiment, is really such a masterpiece and such an ark of financial safety as is commonly supposed.

The principle of "The Church in its Relations to the State" had been pretty well shelved on the ostensible ground, it is believed, that execution could not be conveniently had of it, and in questions concerning toleration the Peelites as a group were on the side of liberty. Such of them as were High Churchmen naturally felt special sympathy in these matters with Roman Catholics, and they were strong opponents of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Their course seemed to be fully warranted by the event, since the Act, which was a mere piece of strategy and claptrap, when the storm of popular indignation was over, became a nullity and fell into contempt. Yet it is not so certain that the storm itself was a bad thing: it let Rome and Europe know that England still belonged to Protestant civilisation. Puseyites were not impartial judges of that question. They were themselves connected with a clerical confederacy which was engaged in furtively Romanising the Protestant Establish-

ment—not a very wholesome process or one free from the tendency to beget Jesuitical and casuistical habits of mind in those who were most actively concerned in it.

In their Irish policy the Peelites as a group were Liberals, but not immoderate Liberals: at least one of them seemed to be startled and somewhat shocked by the appearance of a treatise on the Irish question which had been written by a friend under his roof, and which proposed the abolition of the Anglican Establishment and the reform of the Land Law. High Churchmanship here again showed itself in special sympathy for the grievances of Roman Catholics. The Duke of Newcastle was particularly anxious to cultivate a connection with Irish Liberalism, and he rather rashly entangled himself with that unfortunate combination of Irish Liberal "undertakers," to revive an old name of the political mart, which came to an end in the tragic death of Mr. Sadleir. But of repeal of the Union, or restoration in any form of the Irish Parliament, there never, so far as I know, was any thought in that circle. That fungus, to borrow the scientific metaphor of my friend Professor Tyndall, had not then begun to grow, nor do I believe that any microscope could have discovered a spore of it.¹

Peel's Ministry maintained itself in power by governing well, not by pan-

¹ There has been a not very fruitful discussion as to the opinion which Cobden would probably have held on the present question of Home Rule. I used to talk to Cobden about Ireland and the reforms needed there, such as the abolition of the Establishment and the reform of the Land Law. He always said in effect the same thing—that there was no hope of doing anything until the Irish sent better men to the House of Commons. If the Irish members were like the Scotch, he said, all necessary reforms would soon be accomplished. I do not remember that he ever said a word about the repeal of the Union, nor do I suppose that the question had practically presented itself to his mind. That he was very angry with *The Times* for imputing, as he thought, agrarian tendencies to his friend is scarcely a proof that he would now be on the side of Irish agrarianism.

dering to the love of organic change. His tradition was upheld by such of his personal followers as retained his impress; and they cultivated in an exceptional degree the administrative qualities which were necessary to make it good, presenting themselves to the country, not as demagogues but as useful and faithful servants of the State. Organic change ought to come and must come as the world advances and political conditions change; and in the case of the House of Lords many people who are not revolutionists think that it has been delayed much too long. But organic change in the shape of extension of the franchise used by demagogues of both parties as the means of grasping or retaining power has brought the country into the condition which we see. Ireland is the least part of the present peril. A local rebellion which has not a particle of military force cannot threaten the life of a nation which is otherwise in a sound state; while the agrarian question, perplexing as it is, would settle itself gradually and in various ways, if the arm of Government were strengthened in upholding the law. The chief danger lies in the character of the constituencies to which by blind extension of the franchise without any attempt to strengthen the upper works of the Constitution, supreme power has been abruptly transferred. When to the flood of inevitable ignorance and credulity, thus suddenly let in, shall have been added, by the triumph of Female Suffrage, the irresponsible emotions of the women, and government, in face of a world in arms, shall have thus been emasculated as well as fatally lowered in point of intelligence and patriotism, England

will not be far from the point at which, as society cannot put up with anarchy, reaction, perhaps of a convulsive kind, will set in.

The Peelites, during their temporary independence of party, represented in some measure allegiance to the public good. We have no right to be scandalised when independence is denounced by a municipal wire-puller, though we may heartily wish that the body politic were rid of tapeworms. But we have a right to be scandalised when independence is denounced by a man who set out in public life as the paragon of university training, and is supposed to represent in a supreme degree the liberalising influences of culture on the mind of a statesman. It is true that after deliberate and repeated appeals from the same quarter to the mob to trample down intelligence, after hearing a lieutenant of Sir Robert Peel palliate Boycotting and seeing him abet attempts to wreck the House of Commons by obstruction, we ought to have been prepared for whatever might come next.

History, however, will not permit the Schnadhorstian roller to be passed over her domain, nor does she regard as an unsightly protuberance everything which rises above the dead level of servile conformity to the will of party, so dear to the Schnadhorstian eye. In her future annals the set of men, who, at a great crisis of national peril have set the tyrannical dictation of faction and its leaders at defiance, and in the midst of a shameful scene of egotism, cowardice, and servility, have firmly stood by the country, are not likely to be pilloried as "a public nuisance."

GOLDWIN SMITH.

COLERIDGE AND THE QUANTOCK HILLS.

HAD Coleridge been asked at the close of his chequered life which corner of the world had smiled most kindly upon him, he would, in all probability, have pointed to that retired village of Nether Stowey, in west Somersetshire, where he lived from the autumn of 1796 to the autumn of 1798. As Horace said of Tarentum and the *beatæ arces* of Aulon so might Coleridge have said of Stowey and the happy Quantock hills :

" Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes
Angulus ridet."

Here, cheered by the congenial society of Wordsworth, who lived close by at Alfoxden, blest indeed in his married life begun just before in the cottage at Clevedon, enlivened in his solitude by such occasional visitors as Southey, Lamb, Lloyd, De Quincey, the two Wedgwoods, and others, amongst whom he shone as a bright conversational star, he could abundantly satisfy the sympathies of his genial and affectionate temperament. His rustic Mæcenas, the well-known "Justice" Poole, the oracle of the little hamlet, had drawn him to this nook from Bristol, that ungrateful city which had condemned the youthful Chatterton and rejected Southey.

In truth Nether Stowey and its neighbourhood were exactly suited to the genius of Coleridge and his friends. For the consummation of their poetic ideals they required beauty and solitude, and they found them in the combs and moorlands of the Quantock hills. Nature to them was that Æolian harp, whose

" Long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-land,
Where melodies round honey-dropping flowers,

Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed
wing !

O ! the one life within us and abroad
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul."

Such were the lines Coleridge wrote from his jasmine-covered cottage at Clevedon by the Severn sea, and such was the philosophy he took with him when he migrated thence to that other cottage at the foot of the Quantock Hills. The idyllic life begun at Clevedon was continued at Stowey. These Somersetshire nooks were the fairyland, and Coleridge the elfin bard carrying "soft witchery of sound" to a listening world.

A contemporary of Coleridge has said that the manhood of his true poetical life was in the year 1797, and the truth of the saying is manifest when we consider the work he did during this period. To this time belong his tragedy "Remorse," "Religious Musings," "Christabel," "The Dark Ladie," "The Ancient Mariner," the "Ode to the Departing Year," and "Fears in Solitude." With Wordsworth and Thomas Poole he roamed over the breezy heights of the Quantocks, drinking in at every step inspiration from their heather-clad slopes, the broad valleys and the bright sea-waves far down in the west. Coleridge has said himself in his "Biographia Literaria" that his walks were almost daily on the top of the Quantocks and amongst their sloping combs ; and Wordsworth thus writes in "The Prelude" :

" But, beloved Friend,
When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
Unchecked, or loiter'd 'mid her sylvan combs,
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,

The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
 Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
 And I, associate with such labour, steeped
 In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours."

Although Coleridge when he left his home at Clevedon bravely said in his "Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement" that he went forth into the world and "joined head, heart, and hand" to fight the bloodless fight of science and of freedom in the world, despising the "pampering of the heart" and intellect which nursed itself in delicious solitude, he was far better suited to "the valleys of seclusion" than to the crowded haunts of men. The ideal place for him and his companions was such a corner as the glen at Alfoxden, near Wordsworth's home. Imagine a quiet and sheltered combe, or gorge, with deep and precipitous sides, down which a tumbling stream, rising in the green uplands beyond, makes pleasant music in summer time. Tall trees and nestling undergrowth screen the recesses of this gorge so completely from the outer world that, although the village of Holford is close by, not a sign of man's habitation is in sight. As if to add to the picturesque disorder of the scene, trunks of many ancient trees lie athwart the stream, like natural bridges, left to decay unheeded with all the wasteful prodigality of a primeval forest. These ancient boles are green and grey with a second life of moss, fern, and lichen, for the parasites of Nature hide all deformities of decay with a patient and beautiful growth. Above is a more open and solemn grove, Druidical in its aspect, where grow some of the finest hollies in England.

But to sit by the stream is to court oblivion and the poetic vein. Here and there rock-girt pools arrest the hurrying flood, catch the gleams of light and reflect a rift of the blue sky above. In spring the "dipper" darts quickly by, and the moorland trout, which haunts the pool, rises lazily after the floating May-fly, secure from the hero who dares not entangle himself

in such a close retreat. No tarn in Scotland could be more undisturbed than this. Musing once, with Wordsworth and Thelwall as his companions, Coleridge said, "This is the place to reconcile one to all the jarings and conflicts of the world;" and Thelwall, the arch-conspirator, replied, "Nay, to make one forget them altogether." Abstraction, peace, and solitude were what Coleridge craved for, and they came to him at Stowey just when his life was most joyous, his heart happy, as Wordsworth testifies, and his fancy most vivacious. Think of his life before and after,—a joyless childhood spent in London, followed by a tempestuous youth and a rebellious manhood. The "playless day-dreamer" had grown into a rather morbid, fancy-haunted Ishmaelite in conflict with the world and the powers that be. The whilom Private Comberbach had, at the age of twenty-five, known and suffered more than most young men. Then, in after-life, when the poet left Stowey, he led a wandering existence, especially from 1806 to 1816, dimmed by discontent and dominated by that terrible passion for opium, taken at first as a medicine to alleviate his rheumatic pains, against which his whole energy, at the expense of his poetic force, was summoned to fight. At one time he made an attempt to settle permanently in Cumberland with Wordsworth; but the humidity of the lake country brought out his long-standing malady and rendered his physical existence less enjoyable, less abandoned, and less receptive of Nature's lessons. We do not read of that inspiring companionship and those daily walks in Cumberland which on the Somersetshire hills were such delightful reminiscences to both poets. On the Quantocks Coleridge is more robust, his spirit soars with the Quantock lark, and his fancy teems with his brightest and most original conceptions. Along the shores of the Severn sea he "chaunted the vision of that Ancient Man," and along the airy ridges of the hills he

planned with Wordsworth that revolution in poetic thought which marked these poets as a school by themselves. Wordsworth's preface to his *Lyrical Ballads* has been truly said to inaugurate as clearly as an individual treatise could, a distinct epoch in English poetry. This preface was undoubtedly the offspring of the two poets' meditations and daily communings upon the green paths of the Quantocks.

Great as Coleridge's influence must have been upon Wordsworth, it expressed itself rather in conversational than written argument. He was the eloquent advocate of the Romantic school, Wordsworth the didactic teacher. There is wanting in Coleridge's poems what he himself missed in Lamb's verses, a solid body of thought. In the era of classicisms, which was rejected by both, feeling was too much curbed, formal correctness too much emphasised. Coleridge threw this classicism to the winds with a reckless hand, and did violence to the old rules and rhythms. Wordsworth set this bold and fanciful revolutionary spirit in order, defining its true province, and indicating its character in stately and measured language. It was a conspiracy against classicism developed, if not hatched, in those quiet glens and along those breezy moorland paths, where the spirit of the place is certainly against crude conventionalities.

As in great and general ideas, so in lesser themes the influence of the Quantocks peeps out. It was a Quantock brook which suggested to Coleridge the idea of writing a poem called "The Brook," tracing the spring from its mossy source down to the sea, with every kind of poetic imagery and picturesque allegory. This idea, according to the delightful freemasonry which existed between the poets at this time, was communicated by Coleridge to Wordsworth, and elaborated by the latter in his *Sonnets on the river Duddon*. Again this period was, in the case of Coleridge especially,

a transitional and therefore deeply interesting one, when youthful ideals and early dreams, both vain and impossible, were giving way to substantial realities and assured conditions of life. Both Southey and Coleridge had, like Rousseau, contemplated founding some ideal community across the seas, where all would be equal, and the conditions of a primitive Arcadia realised. In his monody on the death of Chatterton, Coleridge alludes to these ideas :

"Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,
Where Susquehannah pours his untamed stream :
And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side
Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,
Will raise a solemn Cenotaph to thee,
Sweet Harper of time-shrouded Minstrelsy."

But at Nether Stowey this dream of pantisocracy by the banks of the Pennsylvanian river was fated, fortunately for literature, to end in a married life and a peaceful sojourn in our own English scenery. After 1796 we hear little of an American Utopia, for Coleridge had found it on British soil. We know that his married life was not all a happy one, and that clouds came upon a day that seemed to dawn so fair; but we have chosen to dwell simply upon the dawning, and if verse can celebrate the memory of an early married life spent in cheerfulness and content, this has been done by Coleridge.

In religion Coleridge was still a Unitarian when at Stowey, and he used often to walk to Taunton, some eleven or twelve miles off, to take the duty of Mr. Joshua Toulmin, the Unitarian teacher there. But a change was slowly coming over him, not simply in his views upon single theological doctrines, but in his general attitude of thought. It was in this rural retreat that the influence of such writers as Jacob Böhme really began to work. In his criticism of Coleridge's poetry, Professor Brandl, of the University of Prague, in his work "Samuel Taylor Coleridge und die Englische Romantik," observes that in some of his lyrical poems of 1797

there is more congenial warmth, more characteristic thought than elsewhere in his writings. Here, he argues, Coleridge shows himself in his truest light, forgetting the part of the mystic and the dreamer. Here he produces for us not gruesome imaginations and weird shuddering fancies, but a devotional feeling and wisdom. So the German critic prefers such pieces as the "Ode to the Departing Year," "France," and the "Lines to the Rev. George Coleridge," to many of his other poems and even to "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel."

In his lines to George Coleridge, after pathetically contrasting his own troubled lot with his brother's, he declares that at last he has found peace and happiness.

"Beside one friend,
Beneath the impervious covert of one oak,
I've raised a lowly shed, and know the names
Of husband and of father; not unhearing
Of that divine and nightly whispering voice
Which from my childhood to maturer years
Spoke to me of predestinated wreaths,
Bright with no fading colours!"

The cottage at Nether Stowey in which this short peace was found, was a very small one, with a yearly rental of only seven pounds—two pounds more than the Clevedon home cost; but it was the poet's *casa parva*, and brought what gold cannot bring. Of course, it is greatly changed now in appearance, no trouble having been taken at any time to keep it as the poet left it. Instead of that picturesque little abode, the shrubbery, the lime-tree bower, and "sweet sequestered orchard-spot," the visitor finds a very common-place public-house, the Coleridge Cottage Inn. The house abuts on the highway, and is the last on the left-hand as you journey towards Minehead and the west. By fate's strange irony the poet's home has become a drinking tavern; and the rooms which listened once to the wisdom of sages now re-echo the rude mirth of the Somersetshire rustics who refresh themselves here on their travels. The fabric of the cottage has been considerably

altered, a second story having been added and a wing built out. The back premises are strewn with the motley collection of tubs, barrels, and general rubbish of a village inn, and all that is left of the little pleasance of shrubs is a struggling remnant of the tenacious bay-tree. Quite recently a shingly path was discovered leading from the cottage to the end of the orchard, and thence through a postern to the grounds of Mr. Poole, who lived close by; and this path must often have been used by the two friends in preference to the noisy village street.

But Nether Stowey itself has not much altered. It is simply a little agricultural village with a decreasing population depending upon no especial manufacture. In former times there used to be a silk throwstriding industry at Marsh Mills in Over Stowey, but this occupation has long since ceased to be remunerative. Nether Stowey has earned the name of being "a radical little shop," but this summary description of its political proclivities is not quite fair. There are a few sturdy and independent characters in the place, and a certain number of small freeholders, but there is very little desire to upset the British Constitution amongst them. The people are naturally kind-hearted and courteous, and are soon won by the same qualities in others. There is indeed a certain notorious set of people called "broom squires," who live at the outskirts of the village, and have so long been regarded as the Ishmaelites of the little community that they have accepted the name and adopted the character.

The appearance of the village itself is rather an unusual one. The houses are crowded together rather closely along the chief streets, Lime Street, and, nearly at right angles to it, Castle Street; and at the spot where they meet an old cross and market-place once stood. Here, in summer, the local band plays once a week in a very creditable manner. This band

is said to have owed its origin to the encouraging patronage of Mr. Poole, who, in his fatherly way, wished his Nether Stowey children to be merry and sing and play on the site of the old market-place. Stories are still told how he would pick out a rustic Tityrus and have him taught to tune his rude measures aright; and, so far, the good he has done, to invert the Shakespearian phrase, lives after him, for Nether Stowey is famous for its excellent church-choir and its band. There are people still living who keep boyish memories of this kind old gentleman. He loved Nature sincerely, as one would expect of Coleridge's friend, and the story goes that when a favourite oak of his was once doomed to be cut down, he paid ten pounds to the owner to save it from this unworthy end. The tree still survives, a hale and hearty tree, one of the most beautiful in the neighbourhood, and destined, if spared by the woodman, to see many more generations of the villagers come and go.

There can be little doubt that this Quantock scenery sank deeply into Coleridge's being. Both he and Wordsworth, living the free and open life they did upon the ridges, were constantly transcribing with the greatest accuracy, and at the same time with the greatest enthusiasm, all the moods and changes of Nature. Cowper, who preceded them, described scenery with a faithful hand, but it was a very different description of scenery and the hand also was different. Neither Stowey nor Alfoxden were like the snug, perhaps one may call it the tame, retreat of Cowper, looking forth upon the world from the banks of his dear Ouse,

"Slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled
o'er."

Coleridge and his friend looked forth upon the world from a wilder and more inspiring nook. They looked daily upon wide expanses, in autumn dim with a purple light from heather

and ling: they looked upon deep and solemn glens echoing with the rush of waters and shrouded in deep gloom: they looked upon green and sloping glades by the woodland's edges, through which the wild red deer, leaving their warm coverts of fern, wandered soft and ghostlike, like shadows across the moonlit sward. They could lift their eyes and see before them a distant and ever-varying prospect down where the sea-waves broke upon the strand and where the sea-breeze swept over broken and precipitous cliffs. The Quantocks are not unlike a bit of Scotland transplanted into Somersetshire. There is wildness on the moorland, but it is redeemed by the tender beauties of the well-tilled, deep-pastured valleys. The slopes are soft and rounded, and the combs are deeply and heavily wooded almost everywhere, unlike the ranges of Exmoor and Dartmoor. The eye will never see a bare or rugged boulder, for all the nakedness of Nature is covered on the Quantocks with a soft mantle of golden gorse and purple heather. In autumn the air is alive with the hum of bees gathering honey on every hill-side from the scented heather-bells, and lulling the loiterer to sleep with their drowsy music. The soil is red and warm-looking, being on the new red sandstone formation, and is pleasanter to look upon in the full glare of summer or in the subdued light of winter than the white chalk hills of other counties. The sturdy whortleberry bush covers every hill-side with its box-like growth, giving profitable occupation to the merry bands of wort-gatherers in summer, and the tall bracken waves in green masses everywhere. To the pedestrian it is a tract of country free and open for its explorations, and truly merits Wordsworth's description of it as "an unappropriated range of earth." The Quantocks are at once an epic and an idyll. Coleridge found them a congenial resting-place, where he could give reins to the wildest fancies, as in "The Ancient Mariner" and "Chris-

table," or sing a simple song of peace and contentment.

"Oh! 'tis a quiet, spirit-healing nook!
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly as had made
His early manhood more securely wise!
Here might he lie on fern or withered heath,
While from the singing lark (that sings unseen
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of Nature!"

Dim and indefinite and altogether shadowy these influences may be to those who live within the circle of a busy town-life, but they were certainly real to Coleridge, and they had a solid basis and foundation upon the beautiful objects of Nature and the concrete images of the world. City-loving poets, like Alfred de Musset, cannot grasp this freshness of life, this second youth, renewed again amongst congenial fields. When their lives have been spent and their passions exhausted within the boundaries of cities and amidst the intoxications of a cosmopolitan life, their hold on Nature is gone and their sympathy with her is dead. After a tempest we notice how the sea, sinking back into its accustomed calm, murmurs again with short crisp wavelets upon the shore, smoothing the unsightly chasms made by its angrier billows; so is it with the poet who holds passions in the hollow of his hand, and, stronger than passion, can pause to think, to arrange, to curb his perturbation, and, in a word, to philosophise, making up a "meditative joy" from "many feelings, many thoughts." He has the power of repairing the ravage of the tempest and of gathering from it wisdom for himself. Coleridge, like Shakespeare, of whose dramatic characters he was one of the best interpreters, could feel deeply and strongly all the tragic realities of the world—surely he had been a sufferer himself in his own life!—and yet touch them all again

with a light and strong hand. His judgment was never upset so that passion could claim a permanent sway; nor was it so overwhelmed and cowed by the "whips and scorns of time" that he went sorrowing all his days. His strength lay in a peaceful contemplation of Nature and of the lessons from the outer world.

In his "Ode to France" Coleridge has well defined the meaning of the sacred word liberty for Frenchmen. She is a goddess who speeds on subtle pinions from "Priestcraft's harpy minions" as well as from "factious blasphemy's obscene slaves." It might be to the advantage of Frenchmen to see the goddess, as Coleridge poetically phrased it, "in the clouds coming from the rising sun and from the blue rejoicing sky"; in other words, as a divinity of the open air akin to some physical representation in Nature, instead of a tawdry and revolutionary spirit calling to men from the reeking stews of Parisian slums. Perhaps Coleridge best explains his own idea of liberty gathered from physical images when he writes,

"And there I felt thee! on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O liberty! my spirit felt thee there."

Surely this definition of liberty which is a sentiment and feeling rather than a declaration by a National Convention or a bold assertion of "liberty, equality and fraternity" suits the spirit and traditions of a sea-faring nation like ours! And in his "Fears in Solitude" Coleridge has again given a noble definition of patriotism. England is the "divine and beauteous island" his

"Sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me!"

For he has "drunk in all his intellectual life" from her lakes and hills, from her clouds, her quiet dales, her rocks and seas, giving him

"All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts."

These reflections on liberty and patriotism came to him in the remote village of Stowey, so peaceful in itself, so far removed from war's realities, when Europe was being deluged with blood. But even there alarm of invasion had come, to strengthen men's patriotism and nerve their arms. At any moment the fire-beacon on Willsneck, the highest point of these beautiful Quantocks, might be lit, carrying the news of the enemy's approach from Dunkerry, the peak on Exmoor on the west, to Glastonbury Tor on the east. The contrast between the calm beauty of the "green and silent spot" where he writes and all the grim excitements of war stirs Coleridge's imagination. He prays that

"The vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roar'd and died away
In the distant tree; which, heard, and only
heard,
In this lone dell, bowed not the delicate grass."

It was the same with love and friendship: the Quantocks have the power of recalling and strengthening old passions and old loves, and of giving intensity to his feelings as father, husband and friend.

- "How warm this woodland wild recess!
Love surely hath been breathing here.
And this sweet bed of heath, my dear!
Swell up, then sinks with faint caress,
As if to have you yet more near.
- "Eight springs have flown since last I lay
On sea-ward Quantock's heathy hills,
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills
Float here and there, like things astray,
And high o'er head the sky-lark shrills.
- "No voice as yet had made the air
Be music with your name; yet why
That asking look? that yearning sigh?
That sense of promise everywhere?
Beloved! flew your spirit by?"

In the lines composed whilst climbing Brockley Combe Coleridge was still in that happy frame of mind and imagination which needs but a voice from Nature to recall the happiness of love. He describes the scenery and tells us of the sweet songsters, the cuckoo's unvarying note, of the white May, the burst of spring and all the joy of the world, and then he turns quickly to the central human love without which nature is incomplete.

"Deep sighs my lonely heart! I drop the tear;
Enchanting spot! Oh, were my Sara here!"

So, at Shurton Bars, near the estuary of the Parret on the Bristol Channel, the image of Sara is still with him. The shore at Shurton Bars is lonely and solemn: the tide retreats far back to the Channel's bed: the space between the high-water mark and the ebbing tide is flat, dark, and oozy: the curlew utters his long piercing whistle, waking the echoes of the dreary expanse of mud and slime. The scene is one of wild desolation and gloomy emptiness, as different from the warm and cheerful haunts of the Quantock hills as it is possible to conceive. Here Coleridge sat in the twilight one day and, surrendering himself to the sombre influences of the scene, thought of his darker hours and gloomier life. He saw the light just twinkling from the lighthouse on the Flat Holmes opposite, like "a sullen star" to drowsy sailors. There he would have liked to sit, "a sad gloom-pampered man," listening to the roar of the beating waves and viewing with a vindictive joy the sight of vessels drifting to destruction on the rocks. So bitter seemed life to him that it eradicated all human sympathy. But "peace with Sara came," and his heart suddenly sings with the skylark, only forgetful by chance—a pretty fancy—when it couches beneath the red sleep-giving poppy. All his woes now are like "the smiling tears which swell the opened rose." They fall from heaven, and, blending with the sunbeam, put to flight dark images of the soul.

Coleridge has surely found something fresh to say on the well-worn theme of the nightingale. The note of the bird shall be "the harbinger of joy," and shall give to his child some association of joy wherewith to charm away the spirits of darkness :

" His childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy."

In another poem, "Frost at Midnight," written at Stowey, he follows up this line of thought, and draws a contrast between what his own life had been and what he hoped that of his child would be. He had pitied Charles Lamb, "hungering after Nature many a year, in the great city pent," and he pitied himself for losing a childhood's training, such as, we imagine, that of his friend Wordsworth's had been.

" For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and
shores
And mountain crags ; so shalt thou see and
hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself.
Great universal Teacher ! He shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask."

So all things and all seasons will be
sweet to the child, whether the summer

comes upon the earth with greenness, or the red-breast sits and sings beneath the tufts of winter snow, whether the eve-drops fall at night in the trances of a storm, or whether the secret ministry of frost hangs them up in silent icicles. Nature, indeed, will be a universal Teacher. Hers is a plain and open air teaching taken straight from the earth and God's broad heaven. Some are naturally more susceptible to it than others, but it never can come wholly by instinct : it needs training, observation, and a diligent watchfulness for beauty and for beautiful things. It would bid us look, not once nor twice, but again and again upon what we love and admire, such as a flower, a wood, a hill-side, a bit of the moorland waste and the great sea and the sky beyond ; or it would bid us listen again and again to the sounds and voices of Nature, and all the outward world will come back to us when we need it to elevate and refine.

" One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

Such ideas have nothing to do with Christian orthodoxy nor are they contradictory to any creed or formula of religion. They are but an echo taken up by the poet of that great verse in Genesis : " And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

WILLIAM GRESWELL.

OCTOBER.

A FITFUL wind about the eaves,
That sways the creaking door;
The shadows of the falling leaves
Flit past me on the floor.

The autumn skies are clear above,
But silent is their song;
Oh, spirit of the changeless love
Keep back my autumn long!

In vain with gold the forest weaves
Its sylvan greenness o'er;
The shadows of the falling leaves
Flit past me on the floor.

It means the world is growing old,
It means no birds to sing:
Oh, not for all the autumn's gold
Would I forego my spring!

R. R.

M. ANATOLE FRANCE.¹

SOMETHING perverse and irritating has generally been found in modern French novels, both in the writers' choice of subjects and in their manner of treating them. The perversity is all the more apparent because the novelists have other qualities which have been recognised as of high and rare value. An artistic instinct has probably never been so widely diffused throughout a literary class as it has been through the ranks of the modern writers of fiction in France: never has the average novelist attained so high a level of pictorial power and linguistic skill. Higher qualities than these have indeed been ascribed by some critics to the chiefs of French romance, but others than Englishmen have doubted whether the French have as yet produced any writer to be matched with Walter Scott, Thackeray, or Dickens. Balzac is never quite such an artist as Thackeray: Dumas is a Walter Scott—with a difference; and Hugo, though he may be in his own way incomparable, is a divinity with feet of unconcealed clay. But we are not now speaking of the highest names. It is when we come to the second flight, the "general choir" of fiction, that the merit of the French writers manifests itself so clearly. A certain choiceness of expression, an air of distinction, a controlled art, a literary finish belong not only to Daudet and Sandeau, Cherbuliez and Flaubert, Feuillet and Münger together with many others of the same literary class, but extend downwards through a host of writers, who have yet, perhaps, to make their mark, but who appear to conceive by

some admirable instinct the just conditions and limits of literary workmanship.

But there is another side to this agreeable picture. On the literature as a whole there is imprinted an indelible stamp of coarseness and indelicacy, a blemish in art and not only in morals. It is as though the genius of the French nation had never shaken its wings free of some of the slime of the Revolution and the Commune, so that the higher slopes of Parnassus with their purer air and translucent atmosphere remained for ever inaccessible. For art, too, has its own peculiar Nemesis, like life itself: the same divine figure can reveal itself at once as frail phantom of flesh and as goddess confessed. Just as it rests with the man who thinks and acts to find in life either an Ebal or a Gerizim, so it rests with the worshipper to find in art either an Astarte or the virgin Artemis. It seems now to have come with French writers to be almost taken for granted as a literary canon that art varies inversely as morals. If a book has about it a wholesome and sweet air it is tantamount to a confession of mawkishness and prudery, while, on the contrary, artistic independence and strength can apparently only be secured by the sacrifice of health and chastity. It may be disguised under high-sounding formulas, such as art for art's sake, but such a view, whether tacitly acknowledged or openly expressed, in reality indicates an incomplete culture. Indeed there are many signs that the French culture, however brilliant and picturesque, gains these superficial qualities just because it lacks depth and thoroughness. Their painting and their music seem to exhibit precisely similar characteristics, and the real

¹ "Poèmes Dorés:" "Les Noces Corinthiennes:" "Les Désirs de Jean Servien:" "Jocaste:" "Le Chat Maigre:" "La Bûche:" "Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard:" "Nos Enfants:" "Le Livre de Mon Ami."

French philosophy is that of Cousin and Jouffroy—a philosophy of eclecticism, clear and comprehensive and synthetic just because it is wanting in psychological and metaphysical analysis.

M. Anatole France, a writer as yet little known in England, is a welcome exception to the general run of his literary brethren. It is impossible to claim for him the highest honours, which probably he would be himself the first to disavow. Yet, though he be not an artist of the first rank, he has the true artistic temperament and a good many other qualities besides. A scholar, a student of Greek literature, with a strange fancy for the *bizarre* and the unfamiliar in life and character, a man of the world, a philosopher of an amiable type, whose gentle cynicism is never otherwise than charming, a lover of books, a lover of children, full of the milk of human kindness, which sometimes he likes to imagine as turning sour, and above all possessed of a quality which is rare in a French writer, a native vein of rich and quiet humour—such is M. Anatole France. Nor must the characteristic be forgotten which makes him veritably phenomenal, for his books can without hesitation be read aloud *virginibus puerisque*.

M. France is emphatically a man of culture. It is only in "Le Livre de Mon Ami" and "Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard" that he has attained the full mastery of his powers; but his earlier books show the diverse studies and varied interests of his more youthful years. In "Les Noces Corinthiennes," for instance, we find a story of the family conflicts which doubtless so often arose in the early years of Christianity between the new and the Pagan creed. Daphne, the daughter of Hermas the Corinthian, is engaged to be married to Hippias, but though she and her mother, Kallista, have embraced the new faith, her father and her lover still worship the older gods of their country. To complicate matters still further, a vow has been made

by Kallista to dedicate her daughter to perpetual virginity, as a thank-offering for an escape from illness. Daphne and Hippias meet, and the old love proves stronger than the new creed. Though driven away by the curses of the mother, Hermas is re-joined by Daphne at nightfall; but the young Christian girl, unable to bear the strain of the conflict between her religion and her affections, has taken poison, and dies in her lover's arms.

A curious story, called "Le Chat Maigre" transplants us to a different scene. Here we live in the atmosphere of Bohemianism, with all the queer figures that haunt the outskirts of the literary and artistic world—men of some fixed though visionary idea, or men of no idea at all, who oscillate between madness and sense—eccentric, ingenious, versatile creatures, who are as little troubled with conscience as with cash. M. France does not conceal his fondness for these capricious personages. They meet us again and again in his pages with all their odd ways and unmethodical behaviour: not only the queer characters of "Le Chat Maigre," such as M. Godet Laterasse, and the Negro general Télémaque, the philosopher Branchut, and the sculptor Labanne, but also M. Fellaire de Sisac and M. Haviland in "Jocaste," and uncle Victor and M. Coccoz in "La Bûche." René Longuemare is a character of a different stamp. He is the young scientist, the medical student, who has discovered the illusions of life and meets them with a sort of fierce resignation, and who, when he knows that there is an end of all his hopes of marrying the girl he loves, notes with savage joy each sign of decay in his own physical frame, as bringing him nearer to Lethe. Rarely does the author allow himself the bitterness which he has given to René Longuemare: his own is rather the placid mood which appears in Sylvestre Bonnard, *Membre de l'Institut*. Of all the tales, "Jocaste," in which this disappointed physician

appears, is the one which seems, both in style and treatment, to fall farthest below the usual work of M. France. It is a crude story of a girl who is too weakly nervous to bear the troubles in which she finds herself, and who commits suicide in so unromantic a locality as a bath on the Seine. Yet even here M. France's training in Greek literature, which appears so happily in his later work, finds a curious expression. To *Helène*, who can find no issue to the tangles of life, the suggestion is conveyed of a death by hanging through a schoolboy construing out of a play of Sophocles the fate of her Greek prototype, *Jocasta*, the wife of *Laius*. The passage is so characteristic in its union of tragedy and humour that it is worth transcribing.

"About ten o'clock *Jocaste* heard a slamming of doors. It was her nephew *Georges* who returned as usual from school. He threw his books down on the table sulkily and by chance looked at his aunt: 'What big eyes you have got to-day,' he said. He opened his books, and complained, with the wry face of a stupid schoolboy, that he had to do a Greek lesson. Then seating himself on his foot, at the very edge of his chair, he began to turn over lazily the pages of his dictionary. Notwithstanding his grimaces, he translated very fairly, effacing with his tongue the ink-blots which he made in writing. She listened in a sort of stupor, and started at the kicks which the boy bestowed on his chair-rail. He was imitating the grave voice and bombastic tone of his master: 'Remark, gentlemen, the harmony of Sophocles's lines. We do not know how the words were pronounced, we probably pronounce them all wrong, but what harmony! Monsieur *Labrunière*, you will conjugate ten times the verb *διδόμι*. What harmony! 'Kara theion, the divine head, *Jokastés*, of *Jocasta*, *letheúken* is dead... What rot this is! She went *pros ta leké numphicea*, towards the nuptial couch, that is to say to her bedroom—remark, gentlemen, what a happy expression! and what harmony! . . . *Sposa komeu*, tearing her hair, *kalei* she calls, *Laión*, *Laius*, *nekron*, dead. You see, aunt, that in French, a *Laius* is a sermon, but in Greek it is a fellow that *Jocasta* had married, and the marriage had not turned out well. Tearing her hair she calls on *Laius* dead.' In the midst of all this confused babble of Greek and French, *Helen* disentangled the grand old story of a desperate woman. The boy hurried on to the end of his task. 'Eskodomén tén gunáika krenastén, we saw the woman hung.' He made a dash with his pen

which tore the paper, put out his tongue all stained with ink, and then began to sing, 'Hung! hung! I have finished!' *Helen* rose and went up to her room so calm, so resolute, so certain, that she seemed like a statue of Necessity."

She then goes down to the baths on the Seine and commits suicide by hanging herself in her bath-room. The catastrophe is so startling that it becomes almost ludicrous; but it affords no bad example of the way in which M. France reads modern tragedy in the light of ancient drama. A more graceful evidence of scholarship is furnished by the dialogue which M. France publishes at the end of "*Le Livre de Mon Ami*," in which he applies the conclusion of comparative mythology to nursery tales like *Little Red Riding Hood* and the *Sleeping Beauty* in the Wood.

But the early studies and the more youthful interests give place to the philosophical serenity which is the most gracious gift of age. Classicism, Neo-Hellenism, Bohemianism pass away or merge themselves in the wise tenderness of M. *Sylvestre Bonnard*. A more fascinating study of middle-age can hardly be found in modern literature than that which M. Anatole France has embodied in his psychological study of the gentle *savant* and philologist who is so proud to be a member of the Institute. The years which bring the philosophic mind have given him so much of cynicism that he recognises that all life is made up of shadows, and that our passions and hopes and fears play over the surface of reality like the reflections of waving trees on some rippling stream. Here is a charming scene between *Bonnard* and a pedlar who offers him a variety of worthless books, which illustrates as well as any other the humours of M. France's sage. M. *Coccoz* advances into M. *Bonnard's* room with a number of little bows and smiles.

"Good heavens, what novelties the *mannikin Coccoz* offered me! The first volume

which he put into my hand was the 'History of the Tower of Nesle with the Loves of Margaret of Burgundy and the Captain Buridan.' 'It is a historical book,' he said to me, smiling, 'a book of veritable history.' 'In that case,' I answered, 'it is very tedious, for historical books which do not tell lies are all very wearisome. I myself write some fine histories, and if for your misfortune you were to offer one of these from door to door, you would run the risk of keeping it all your life in your green bag without finding even a kitchen-maid foolish enough to buy it.' 'Certainly, sir,' answered the little man out of pure complaisance. And with many smiles he offered me 'The Loves of Héloïse and Abelard,' but I made him understand that at my age I had nothing to do with a love tale. Still smiling, he proposed to sell me the Rules of Social Games, including piquet, bezique, *carté*, whist, &c. 'Alas!' I said, 'if you wish to remind me of the rules of bezique, restore to me my old friend Bignan, with whom I used to play at cards every evening before five academies had solemnly conducted him to the cemetery; or debase the grave intelligence of my cat Hamilear to the frivolity of human games; you see her sleeping on this cushion, the sole companion of my evenings.' The smile of the little man became vague and bewildered. 'See,' said he, 'here is a new collection of society-amusements, *facetie* and magician's tricks, with the method of transforming a red rose into a white one.' I told him that I had long ago quarrelled with roses, and so far as *facetie* were concerned, I was quite content with those which I involuntarily made in the course of my scientific studies. The mannikin offered me his last book with his last smile. 'Here,' said he, 'is the 'Key to Dreams,' with an explanation of all the dreams one can have, the dream of gold, the dream of a thief, the dream of death, the dream that one tumbles off a tower—all complete.' I had seized the toms, and I waved them energetically in the air as I answered my commercial visitor. 'Yes, my friend,' said I, 'but these dreams and a thousand others besides, joyous and tragic, are all included in a single one, the dream of life. Will your little yellow book give me the key to that?' 'Yes, sir,' answered the little man, 'the book is complete, and not dear, one franc twenty-five centimes, sir.'

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loves still; but what he loves is merely a memory, and that is too unsubstantial a thing to evoke passion. All men and women seem to him puppets, worked with strings held by unknown fingers. And so he has a sort of Epicurean pity for them all, and gently wonders why they should disturb themselves so much over trifles. Nor will he spare himself in his complacent laughter. He knows of himself that he is a pedant, to whose philological instincts all things are words. He is quite aware that he is a bit of a gourmand, and that he has a keenly expressive nose, which has often played him false and revealed the feelings which he himself had desired to conceal. He is honestly afraid of his housekeeper, Thérèse, who is an admirable but tyrannical character, who requires managing before she can be made to yield to any of her master's whims.

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person the formidable appearance of a Tartar warrior with the drooping grace of an Eastern beauty. Heroic and voluptuous Hamilear, sleep and wait for the hour when the mice will dance in the moonlight before the *Acta Sanctorum* of the learned Bollandists."

Hamilear receives this apostrophe with mixed feelings. The commencement of the discourse appeared pleasing, for the cat accompanied it with a purring like the noise of a boiling pot. But as the philosopher raised his voice, Hamilear warns him by lowering its ears and wrinkling up its striped forehead that it was bad taste to declaim in this way. "This book-man," evidently thought Hamilear, "talks nonsense, whilst our housekeeper only gives vent to words full of sense and meaning, containing either the announcement of a repast or the promise of a whipping. One can understand what she says. But this old fool puts together sounds which mean nothing."

M. Bonnard is, as has been said, fond of apostrophes, and as he remembers his early love for Clementine who refused to marry him, he breaks out into many rhapsodies. Clementine married an adventurer who became bankrupt: husband and wife both died, and it becomes the task and pleasure of Bonnard to look after the only child, Jeanne Alexandre. She has however first to be rescued from a dragon of a schoolmistress who persists in believing that she herself is the object of M. Bonnard's admiration; hence arise many amusing misadventures, and the final abduction of Jeanne, which constitutes the crime of the blameless *savant*. M. France's studies of women are well worthy of notice. He excels in depicting them as generous, warm-hearted children of Nature, and to the Jeanne Alexandre and Madame de Gabry of "Le Crime" must be added the charming study of Madame Coccoz, afterwards the Princesse de Trépoif in "La Bûche." Clementine, too, though she is but a shade, sheds a kindly influence over all M. Bonnard's thoughts; and few passages in that worthy's diary, who had promised

to himself "not to end with sterile irony what he had commenced in a spirit of faith and love," are better worth reading than the words in which he invokes her memory.

"From the sphere where you are to-day, Clementine, look upon this heart, now chilled by age, whose blood boiled erewhile for you. Say if its spirit does not revive at the thought of loving what remains of you on earth. All things pass, for you too have passed. But life is immortal; it is life which we ought to love, in its forms so ceaselessly renewed. All else is a child's game; and I with all my books am but a little boy, playing with knuckle-bones. The end of life, you, Clementine, have revealed to me."

Because M. Anatole France has himself outlived his days of storm and stress, he can paint the quiet joys of middle-age, and for the same reason he can go back to the simple life and pleasures of a child. He can write stories for children, which though they have sometimes the touches which remind one of the mellow thoughtfulness of M. Sylvestre Bonnard, can be read and appreciated by children themselves. In "Nos Enfants, Scènes de la Ville et des Champs," he has collected a series of little studies of children's joys and interests, full of a quiet charm of style and a purity of thought, which have not been misinterpreted in the clever illustrations of M. de Monvel. These studies are all about nothing—little scenes of the morning or afternoon or evening, a child's dolls, or a boy's wooden horses, or a class-room, or a little sick girl, or a dog, or dead leaves, or a simple flower. But it is not every one who can write about trifles; and sometimes the words seem to have in them that quality which brings tears to those whose childhood is a memory. It is however especially in "Le Livre du Mon Ami" that M. France's graceful sympathies with childhood are manifested. The book is written from the standpoint of a child: the author shows us this world of ours as seen through the eyes of a small boy. It is indeed our world, and yet not our world. We recognise it as our own, but it comes before us with

a fresh and novel charm, and leaves us with kindlier thoughts than we felt before. No child could of course have been conscious of all the subtle thoughts which M. France insinuates so cleverly. But we accept the delusion gladly: we are the willing accomplices in the act of deception, and dream that we too are once again young.

"I had a little bed, which remained all the day in a corner, and which my mother placed every night in the middle of the room, in order to bring it near her own bed, with those immense curtains which filled me with such fear and admiration. It was quite a business to put me to bed. It required supplications, tears, and kisses. And that was not all; I used to run away in my nightgown, and I jumped like any rabbit. My mother caught me at last under a piece of furniture to put me to bed. It was great fun. But no sooner had I lain down than persons entirely strangers to my family commenced to defile around me. They had noses like storks' beaks, bristling moustaches, stomachs sticking out before them, and legs like cocks. They showed themselves in profile with a round eye in the middle of their cheeks and made a long procession carrying brooms, spits, guitars, syringes, and some unknown instruments. Ugly as they were, they ought not to have shown themselves; but I must do them one piece of justice—they marched noiselessly along the wall, and not one of them, not even the smallest and last of them, who had a pair of bellows behind him, made a single step towards my bed. A superior force retained them visibly on the walls along which they glided without having any appreciable breadth. That reassured me a little; however, I remained awake. It is not in such company, as you can understand, that one closes an eye. I kept mine wide open. And yet the marvel was that I found myself all of a sudden in a room bathed in sunlight, only seeing my mother in her rose-coloured dressing-gown, and quite unable to understand how the night and its monsters had fled. 'What a sleeper you are,' said my mother laughing. I must indeed have been a famous sleeper."

And *dormeur fameux*, too, is M. Anatole France, from whose dreams one parts with regret.

"What," asks Mr. Matthew Arnold, "what is really precious and inspiring, in all that we get from literature, except the sense of an immediate contact with genius itself?" It would perhaps be to inquire too curiously, if we asked whether M. Anatole France is an inspiring genius. Such terms are fortunately relative: each one gets from a good writer what he looks to receive—no more and no less. But to be brought into immediate contact with a mind which has prepared itself by culture and instruction, and which never allows itself to produce anything but what is choice and well-considered—this too is no small benefit. There are no signs of haste or disorder in the work of M. France. He does not strive nor cry: he preaches no gospel: he is neither idealist nor realist. But he thinks pleasantly, easily, gracefully; and he will allow himself no expression until his thought has attained a certain lucid reasonableness. He is, indeed, rather a thinker than a novelist; but he chooses the novelistic form, because he shrinks from what is dogmatic. All the world, its childhood and its age, is reflected in the mirror of his thought; and the image gains in colour owing to the rich susceptibility of the reflecting medium. We know more, after we have read him, and, in his case, knowledge does not embitter. We learn from him a larger tolerance and a deeper pity.

W. L. COURTNEY.

HOMER THE BOTANIST.

THERE are certain low-lying districts in southern Spain where the branched lily, or king's spear, blooms in such profusion that whole acres, seen from a distance towards the end of March, show as if densely strewn with new-fallen snow. Just such in aspect must have been the abode of the Odyssean dead. There, along boundless asphodel plains, Ulysses watched Orion, a spectral huntsman pursuing spectral game: there Agamemnon denounced the treachery of Clytemnestra: there Ajax still nursed his wrath at the award of the Argive kings: there Achilles gnawed a shadowy heart in longing, on any terms, for action and the upper air: thither Hermes conducted the delinquent souls of the suitors of Penelope. A tranquil dwelling place: where the stagnant air of apathy was stirred only by sighs of ineane regret.

Homer's asphodel grows only in the under world, yet it is no mythical plant. It can be quite clearly identified with the *Asphodelus ramosus*,¹ now extensively used in Algeria for the manufacture of alcohol, and cultivated in our gardens for the sake of its tall spikes of beautiful flowers, pure white within and purple-streaked without along each of the six petals uniting at the base to form a deeply-indented starry corolla. The continual visits of pilfering bees attest a goodly store of honey; while the perfume spread over the northern shores of the Gulf of Corinth by the abundant growth of asphodel was said to have given their name, in some far-off century, to the Ozolians of Loeris.

Introduced into England about

¹ The daffodil has no other connection with the asphodel than having unaccountably appropriated its name, through the old French *affodille*. It is a kind of narcissus, while the asphodel belongs to the lily tribe.

1551, it was succeeded, after forty-five years, by the yellow asphodel (*Asphodelus luteus*), of which already in 1633 Gerard in his Herbal reports "great plenty in our London gardens." Hence Pope's familiarity with this kind, and his consequent matter-of-course identification of it with the classical flower in the lines,

"By those happy souls who dwell
On yellow meads of asphodel:"

Wherein he has entirely missed what may with some reason be called the local colouring of Hades.

In order to explain the lugubrious associations of the branched asphodel, we must go back to an early stage of thought regarding the condition of the dead.

Instinctively man assumes that his existence will, in some form, be continued beyond the grave. Only a few of the most degraded savages, or a handful of the most enlightened sceptics, accept death with stolid indifference as an absolute end. The almost universally prevalent belief is that it is a change, not a close. Humanity, as a whole, never has admitted and never can apostatise from its innate convictions by admitting that its destiny is mere blank corruption. Apart from the body, however, life can indeed be conceived, but cannot be imagined; since imagination works only with familiar materials. Recourse was then inevitably had to the expedient of representing the under world as a shadowy reflection of the upper. Disembodied spirits were supposed to feel the same needs, to cherish the same desires, as when clothed in the flesh; but they were helpless to supply the first or to gratify the second. Their opulence or misery in their new abode depended solely upon the pitying care of those who survived

them. This mode of thinking explains the savage rites of sacrifice attendant upon primitive funeral ceremonies: it converted the tombs of ancient kings into the treasure-houses of modern archaeologists; and it suggested a system of commissariat for the dead, traces of which still linger in many parts of the world.

Here we find the clue we are in search of. It is afforded by the simple precautions adopted by unsophisticated people against famine in the realm of death. Amongst the early Greeks, the roots of the branched lily were a familiar article of diet. The asphodel has even been called the potato of antiquity. It indeed surpassed the potato in fecundity, though falling far below it in nutritive qualities. Pliny, in his *Natural History*, states that about eighty tubers, each the size of an average turnip, were often the produce of a single plant; and the French botanist, Charles de l'Écluse, travelling across Portugal in 1564-5, saw the plough disclose fully two hundred attached to the same stalk, and together weighing, he estimated, some fifty pounds. Moreover, the tubers so plentifully developed are extremely rich in starch and sugar, so that the poorer sort, who possessed no flocks or herds to supply their table with fat pork, loins of young oxen, roasted goats' tripe, or similar carnal delicacies, were glad to fall back upon the frugal fare of mallow and asphodel lauded by Hesiod. Theophrastus tells us that the roasted stalk, as well as the seed, of the asphodel served for food; but chiefly its roots, which, bruised up with figs, were in extensive use. Pliny seems to prefer them cooked in hot ashes, and eaten with salt and oil; but it may be doubted whether he spoke from personal experience.

Their consumption, however, was recommended by the example of Pythagoras, and was said to have helped to lengthen out the fabulous years of Epimenides. Yet, such illustrious examples notwithstanding, the de-

generate stomachs of more recent times have succeeded ill in accommodating themselves to such spare sustenance. When about the middle of last century the Abate Alberto Fortis was travelling in Dalmatia, he found inhabitants of the village of Bos-siglina, near Traù, so poor as to be reduced to make their bread of bruised asphodel roots, which, proving but an indifferent staff of life, digestive troubles and general debility ensued. This is the last recorded experiment of the kind. The needs of the human economy are far better, more widely, and almost as cheaply subverted by the tuber brought by Raleigh from Virginia. The plant of Proserpine is left for Apulian sheep to graze upon.

Asphodel roots, accordingly, rank with acorns as a prehistoric, but now discarded article of human food. They were, it is likely, freely consumed by the earliest inhabitants of Greece, before the cultivation of cereals had been introduced from the East. There is little fear of error in assuming that the later Achaian immigrants found them already consecrated by traditional usage to the sustenance of the dead. Perhaps because the immemorial antiquity of their dietary employment imparted to them an idea of sacredness; or, possibly, because the slightness of the nourishment they afforded was judged suitable to the maintenance of the unsubstantial life of ghosts. At any rate, the custom became firmly established of planting graves with asphodel, with a view to making provision for their silent and helpless, yet still needy inmates. With changed associations the custom still exists in Greece, and, very remarkably, has been found to prevail in Japan, where a species of asphodel is stated to be cultivated in cemeteries, and placed, blooming in pots, on grave-stones. We can scarcely doubt that the same train of thought, here as in Greece, originally prompted its selection for sepulchral uses. Unquestionably some of the natives of

the Congo district plant manioc on the graves of their dead, with no other than a provisioning design.¹ The same may be said of the cultivation of certain fruit-trees in the burying-grounds of the South Sea Islanders. One of these is the *Cratogeomys religiosa*, bearing an insipid but eatable fruit, and held sacred in Otaheite under the name of "Purataruru." The *Terminalia glabrosa* fills (or filled a century ago) an analogous position in the Society Islands. It yields a nut resembling an almond, doubtless regarded as acceptable to phantasmal palates.

We now see quite clearly why the Homeric shades dwell in meadows of asphodel. These were, in the fundamental conception, their harvest-fields. From them, in some unexplained subsensual way, the attenuated nutriment they might require must have been derived. But this primitive idea does not seem to have been explicitly present to the poet's mind. It had been already, we can infer, to a great extent lost sight of before his time. It was enough for him that the plant was popularly associated with the dusky regions out of sight of the sun. He did not stop to ask why, his business being to see, and to sing of what he saw, not to reason. He accordingly made his Hades to bloom for all time with the tall white flowers of the king's spear, and so perpetuated a connection he was not concerned to explain.

Homer cannot be said to have attained to any real conception of the immortality of the soul. The Shade which flitted to subterranean spaces when the breath left the body, resembled an animal principle of life rather than a true spiritual essence. Disinherited, exiled from its proper abode, without function, sense, or memory, it survived, a vaporous image, a mere castaway residuum of what once had been a man. Teiresias, the Theban soothsayer, alone, by special privilege of Per-

sephone, retained the use of reason: the rest were vain appearances, escaping annihilation by a scarcely perceptible distinction. No wonder that life should have been darkened by the prospect of such a destiny—or worse. For there were, in the Homeric world to come, awful possibilities of torment, though none of blessedness. Deep down in Tartarus, those who had sinned against the gods—Sisyphus, Ixion, Tantalus—were condemned to tremendous, because unending punishment; while the haunting sense of loss, which seems to have survived every other form of consciousness, giving no rest, nor so much as exemption from fear, pursued good and bad alike. Nowhere does the utter need of mankind for the hope brought by Christianity appear with such startling clearness as in the verses of Homer, from the contrast of the vivid pictures of life they present with the appalling background of despair upon which they are painted.

Its relation to the unseen world naturally brought to the asphodel a host of occult or imaginary qualities. Of true medicinal properties it may be said to be devoid, and it accordingly finds no place in the modern pharmacopœia. Anciently, however, it was known, from its manifold powers, as the "herbic" herb. It was sovereign against witchcraft, and was planted outside the gates of villas and farm-houses to ward off malefic influences. It restored the wasted strength of the consumptive: it was an antidote to the venom of serpents and scorpions: it entered as an ingredient into love-potions, and was sovereign against evil spirits: children round whose necks it was hung cut their teeth without pain, and the terrors of the night flew from its presence. Briefly, its faculties were those of (in Zoroastrian phraseology) a "sniter of fiends;" yet from it we moderns distil alcohol!

"And sweet is moly, but his root is ill,"

wrote Spenser in one of his sonnets. But it may be doubted whether

¹ Unger, "Die Pflanze als Todtenschmuck," p. 23.

he would have committed himself to this sentiment had he realised that the gift of Hermes was neither more nor less than a clove of garlic.

Ulysses, approaching the house of Circe in search of his companions (already, as he found out later, transformed into swine), was met on the road by the crafty son of Maia, and by him forewarned and forearmed against the wiles of the enchantress. Skilled in drugs as she was, a more potent herb than any known to her had been procured by the messenger of the gods. "Therewith," the hero continued in his narrative to the Phæacian king, "the slayer of Argos gave me the plant that he had plucked from the ground, and he showed me the nature thereof. It was black at the root, but the flower was like to milk. The gods call it moly, but it is hard for mortal men to dig; howbeit, with the gods all things are possible." It is thus evident that the Homeric moly is compounded of two elements—a botanical, so to speak, and a mythological. A substratum of fact has received an embellishment of fable. Before the mind's eye of the poet, when he described the white flowers and black root of the vegetable snatched from the reluctant earth by Hermes, was a specific plant, which he chose to associate, or which had already become associated, with floating legendary lore, widely and anciently diffused among our race. The identification of that plant has often been attempted, and not unsuccessfully.

The earliest record of such an effort is contained in Theophrastus' History of Plants. He there asserts the moly of the *Odyssey* to have been a kind of garlic (*Allium nigrum*, according to Sprengel), growing on Mount Cyllene in Arcadia, and of supreme efficacy as an antidote to poisons; but he, unlike Homer, adds that there is no difficulty in plucking it. We shall see presently that this difficulty was purely mythical. The language of Theophrastus suggests that the association of moly with the Arcadian garlic was traditional in his

time; and the tradition has been perpetuated in the modern Greek name *molyza*, of a member of the same family.

John Gerard in his Herbal, calls moly (of which he enumerates several species) the "Sorcerer's garlic," and describes as follows the Theophrastian, assumed as identical with the epic, kind.

"Homer's moly hath very thick leaves, broad toward the bottom, sharp at the point, and hollowed like a trough or gutter, in the bosom of which leaves near unto the bottom cometh forth a certain round bulb or ball of a green colour; which being ripe and set in the ground, groweth and becometh a fair plant, such as is the mother. Among those leaves riseth up a naked, smooth, thick stalk of two cubits high, as strong as is a small walking-staff. At the top of the stalk standeth a bundle of fair whitish flowers, dashed over with a wash of purple colour, smelling like the flowers of onions. When they be ripe there appeareth a black seed wrapt in a white skin or husk. The root is great and bulbous, covered with a blackish skin on the outside, and white within, and of the bigness of a great onion."

So much for the question in its matter-of-fact aspect. We may now look at it from its fabulous side.

And first, it is to be remembered that moly was not a charm, but a counter-charm. Its powers were defensive, and presupposed an attack. It was as a shield against the thrust of a spear. Now if any clear notion could be attained regarding the kind of weapon of which it had efficacy thus to blunt the point, we should be perceptibly nearer to its individualisation. But we are only told that the magic draught of Circe contained pernicious drugs. The poet either did not know, or did not care to tell more.

There is, however, a plant round which a crowd of strange beliefs gathered from the earliest times. This is the *Atropa mandragora*, or mandrake, probably identical with the *Dudain* of Scripture, and called by classical writers *Circea*, from its supposed potency in philtres. The rude resemblance of its bifurcated root to the lower half of the human frame

started its career as an object of credulity and an instrument of imposture. It was held to be animated with a life transcending the obscure vitality of ordinary vegetable existence, and occult powers of the most remarkable kind were attributed to it. The little images, formed of the mandrake-root, consulted as oracles in Germany under the name of *Abrunen*, and imported with great commercial success into this country during the reign of Henry the Eighth, were credited with the power of multiplying money left in their charge, and generally of bringing luck to their possessors, especially when their original seat had been at the foot of a gallows, and their first vesture a fragment of a winding-sheet. But privilege, as usual, was here also fraught with peril. The operation of uprooting a mandrake was a critical one, formidable consequences ensuing upon its clumsy or negligent execution. These were only to be averted by a strict observance of forms prescribed by the wisdom of a very high antiquity. According to Pliny, three circles were to be drawn round the plant with a sword, within which the digger stood, facing west. This position had to be combined, as best it might, with an approach from the windward side, upon his uncanny prey. Through the pages of Josephus the device gained its earliest publicity of employing a dog to receive the death penalty, attendant, in his belief, on eradication. It was widely adopted, and by mediæval sagacity fortified with the additional prescriptions that the canine victim should be black without a white hair, that the deed should be done before dawn on a Friday, and that the ears of the doer should be carefully stuffed with cotton-wool. For, at the instant of leaving its parent-earth, a fearful sound, which no mortal might hear and sanely survive, issued from the upturn root. This superstition found a familiar place in English literature down to the seventeenth century.

Thus Suffolk alleging the futility of bad language in apology for the backwardness in its use with which he has just been reproached by the gentle queen of Henry the Sixth, exclaims,

"Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan,
I would invent as bitter-searching terms,
As curst, as harsh, and horrible to hear,
Deliver'd strongly through my fixed teeth,
With full as many signs of deadly hate,
As lean-fac'd Envy in her loathsome cave."

And poor Juliet enumerates among the horrors of the charnel-house,

"Shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,
That living mortals hearing them, run mad."

The persuasion was, moreover, included amongst the Vulgar Errors gravely combated by Sir Thomas Browne.

Mandragora, then, is the most ancient and the most widely famous of all magic herbs; and the old conjecture is at least a plausible one that from its exclusive possession were derived the evil powers of the daughter of Perse.

Moly, on the other hand, must be sought for amongst the herbaceous antidotes of fable. Perhaps the best known of these is the plant so repugnant to the fine senses of Horace, and smelling abominably in the nostrils of the gallants of the Elizabethan epoch. The name of garlic in Sanskrit signifies "slayer of monsters." It was invoked as a divinity in ancient Egypt. The Eddic valkyr, Sigurdriða, sang of its unassailable virtue. As a sure preservative from witchcraft it was, by mediæval Teutons, infused in the drink of cattle and horses, hung up in lonely shepherds' huts, and buried under thresholds. It was laid on beds against nightmare: it cured the poisoned bites of reptiles: it was eaten to avert the evil effects of digging hellebore; while, in Cuba, immunity from jaundice was secured by wearing, during thirteen days, a collar consist-

ing of thirteen cloves of garlic, and throwing it away at a cross-road, without looking behind, at midnight on the expiration of that term. All the properties of this savoury root, it may be remarked, are beneficent, whereas all those of the mandrake (regarded as an herb, not as an idol) are maleficent. Later folk-lore, however, has not brought them into direct competition. Each is thought of as supreme in its own line. Only in the *Odyssey* (on the supposition here adopted) they were permitted to meet, with the result of signal defeat for the powers of evil.

Thus we see that the identification of moly with garlic is countenanced by whatever scraps of botanical evidence are at hand, fortified by a constant local tradition, no less than by the fantastic prescriptions of superstitious popular observance. The difficulty or peril of uprooting, which made the prophylactic plant obtained by *Hermes* all but unattainable to mortals, is a common feature in vegetable mythology. It figures as the price to be paid for something rarely precious, enhancing its value and at the same time affixing a scarce tolerable penalty to its possession. It belonged, for instance, in varying degrees, to hellebore and mistletoe, as well as to mandragora. With the last it most likely originated, and from it was transferred by *Homer*, in the exercise of his poetical license, to moly.

From the adventure in the *Ægean* isle, as from so many others, *Ulysses* comes out unscathed. The leading motive of his character is found in his multiform experience. He is appointed to see and to suffer all that comes within the scope of Greek humanity. No experience, however perilous, is spared him. Protection from the extremity of evil must and does content him. For his keen curiosity falls in with the design of his celestial patroness, in urging him to drink to the dregs the costly draught of the knowledge of good and evil.

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Yet it is to be noted that from the house of the enchantress there is no exit save through the gates of hell.

Within the spacious confines of the universe there is perhaps but one race of beings whose implanted instincts and whose visible destiny are irreconcilably at war. Man is born to suffer; but suffering has always for him the poignancy of surprise. The long record of multiform tribulation which he calls his history, has been moulded, throughout its many vicissitudes, by a keen and ceaseless struggle for enjoyment. Each man and woman born into the world looks afresh round the horizon of life for pleasure, and meets instead the ever fresh outrage of pain. Our planet is peopled with souls disinherited of what they still feel to be an inalienable heritage of happiness. No wonder, then, that quack-medicines for the cure of the ills of life, should always have been popular. Of such nostrums, the famous *Homeric* drug *nepenthes* is an early example, and may serve for a type.

We read in the *Odyssey* that *Telemachus* had no sooner reached man's estate than he set out from *Ithaca* for *Pylus* and *Lacedæmon*, in order to seek news of his father from *Nestor* and *Menelaus*, the two most eminent survivors of the expedition against *Troy*. But he learned only that *Ulysses* had vanished from the known world. The disappointment was severe, even to tears, notwithstanding that the banquet was already spread in the radiant palace of the Spartan king. The remaining guests, including the illustrious host and hostess, caught the infection of grief, and the pleasures of the table were overclouded.

"Then *Helena* the child of *Zeus* strange things
Devised, and mixed a philter in their wine,
Which so cures heartache and the inward stings,
That men forget all sorrow wherein they pine.
He who hath tasted of the draught divine
Weeps not that day, although his mother die

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And father, or cut off before his eyne
 Brother or child beloved fall miserably,
 Hewn by the pitiless sword, he sitting
 silent by.

Drugs of such virtue did she keep in store,
 Given her by Polydamna, wife of Thön,
 In Egypt, where the rich glebe evermore
 Yields herbs in foison, some for virtue
 known,
 Some baneful. In that climate each doth
 own
 Leech-craft beyond what mortal minds
 attain;
 Since of Pæonian stock their race hath
 grown.
 She the good philter mixed to charm their
 pain,
 And bade the wine outpour, and answering
 spake again.¹

Such is the story which has formed the basis of innumerable conjectures. The name of the drug administered by Helen signifies the negation of sorrow; and we learn that it grew in Egypt, and that its administration was followed by markedly soothing effects. Let us see whither these scanty indications as to its nature will lead us.

Many of the ancients believed nepenthes to have been a kind of bugloss, the leaves of which, infused in wine, were affirmed by Dioscorides, Galen, and other authorities, to produce exhilarating effects. It is certain that in Plutarch's time the hilarity of banquets was constantly sought to be increased by this means. But this was done in avowed imitation of Helen's hospitable expedient. It was, in other words, a revival, not a survival; and possesses for us, consequently, none of the instructiveness of an unbroken tradition.

A new idea was struck out by the Roman traveller, Pietro della Valle, who visited Persia and Turkey early in the seventeenth century. He suspects the true nepenthean draught to have been coffee! From Egypt, according to the antique narrative, it was brought by Helen; and by way of Egypt the best Mocha reached Constantinople, where it served to recreate the spirits, and pass the

heavy hours, of the subjects of Achmet. Of this hypothesis we may say, in the phrase of Sir Thomas Browne, that it is "false below confute." The next, that of honest Petrus la Seine, has even less to recommend it. His erudite conclusion was that in nepenthes the long-sought *aurum potabile*, the illusory ornament of the Paracelsian pharmacopœia, made its first historical appearance! Egypt, he argued, was the birthplace of chemistry, and the great chemical desideratum from the earliest times had been the production of a drinkable solution of the most perfect among metals. Nay, its supreme worth had lent its true motive to the famous Argonautic expedition, which had been fitted out for the purpose of securing, not a golden fleece in the literal sense, but a parchment upon which the invaluable recipe was inscribed. The virtues of the elixir were regarded by the learned dissertator as superior to proof or discussion, in which exalted position we willingly leave them.

More enthusiastic than critical, Madame Dacier looked at the subject from a point of view taken up, many centuries earlier, by Plutarch. Nepenthes, according to both these authorities, had no real existence. The effects ascribed to it were merely a figurative way of expressing the charms of Helen's conversation.

But this was to endow the poet with a subtlety which he was very far from possessing. Simple and direct in thought, he invariably took the shortest way open to him in expression; and circuitous routes of interpretation will invariably lead astray from his meaning. It is clear accordingly that a real drug, of Egyptian origin, was supposed to have soothed and restored appetite to the guests of Menelaus—a drug quite possibly known to Homer only by the rumour of its qualities, which he ingeniously turned to account for the purposes of his story. Now, since those qualities were undoubtedly narcotic, the field of our choice is a narrow one. We

¹ Odyssey, iv. 219—232, Worsley's translation.

have only to inquire whether any, and, if so, what, preparations of the kind were anciently in use by the inhabitants of the Nile valley.

Unfortunately our information does not go very far back. A certain professor of botany from Padua, however, named Prosper Alpinus, has left a remarkable account of his personal observations on the point towards the close of the sixteenth century. The vulgar pleasures of intoxication appear to have been (as was fitting in a Mohammedan country) little in request: among all classes their place was taken by the raptures of solacing dreams and delightful visions artificially produced. The means employed for the purpose were threefold. There was first an electuary of unknown composition imported from India called *bernavi*. But this may at once be put aside, since the "medicine for a mind diseased" given by Polydamna to Helen, was, as we have seen, derived from a home-grown Egyptian herb. There remain of the three soothing drugs mentioned by Alpinus, hemp and opium. Each was extensively consumed; and the practice of employing each as a road to pleasurable sensations was already, in 1580, of immemorial antiquity. One of them was almost certainly the true Homeric nepenthes. We have only to decide which.

The first, as being the cheaper form of indulgence, was mainly resorted to, our Paduan informant tells us, amongst the lower classes. From the leaves of the herb *Cannabis sativa* was prepared a powder known as *assis*, made up into boluses and swallowed, with the result of inducing a lethargic state of dreamy beatitude. *Assis* was fundamentally the same with the Indian *bhag*, the Arabic *hashish*—one of the mainstays of Oriental sensual pleasure.

The earliest mention of hemp is by Herodotus. He states that it grew in the country of the Scythians, that from its fibres garments closely resembling linen in texture were woven in

Thrace, and that the fumes from its burning seeds furnished the nomad inhabitants of what is now Southern Russia, with vapour-baths, serving them as a substitute for washing. Marked intoxicating effects attended this original method of ablution.

In China, from the beginning of the third century of our era, if not earlier, a preparation of hemp was used (it was said, with perfect success) as an anæsthetic; and it is mentioned as a remedy under the name of *bhanga*, in Hindu medical works of probably still earlier date. Its identity with nepenthes was first suggested in 1839, and has since been generally acquiesced in. But there are two objections.

The practice of eating or smoking hemp, for the sake of its exalting effects upon consciousness, appears to have originated on the slopes of the Himalayas, to have spread thence to Persia, and to have been transmitted farther west by Arab agency. It was not, then, primitively an Egyptian custom, and was assuredly unknown to the wife of Thôn. Moreover, hemp is not indigenous on the banks of the Nile. It came thither as an immigrant, most probably long after the building of the latest pyramid. Herodotus includes no mention of it in his curious and particular account of the country; and, which is still more significant, no relic of its textile use survives. Not a hempen fibre has ever been found in any of the innumerable mummy-cases examined by learned Europeans. The ancient Egyptians, it may then be concluded, were unacquainted with this plant, and we must look elsewhere for the chief ingredient of the comfort-bringing draught distributed by the daughter of Zeus.

There is only opium left. If the case for identity fail here, nothing remains but to throw up the brief. But so extreme a measure is happily not needed. No serious discrepancy starts up to shake our belief that we have indeed reached the truth. All the circumstances correspond to ad-

miration: the identification runs "on all fours." The physical effects indicated agree perfectly with those resulting from a sparing use of opium. They tend to just so much elevation of spirits as would impart a roseate tinge to the landscape of life. The intellect remains unclouded and serene. The Nemesis of indulgence, however moderate, is still behind the scenes. The exhibition of a soporific effect has even been seriously thought to have been designed by the poet, in the proposal of Telemachus to retire to rest shortly after the nepenthean cup has gone round; but so bald a piece of realism can scarcely have entered into the contemplation of an artist of such consummate skill.

For ages past, Thebes in Egypt has witnessed the production of opium from the expressed juice of poppy-heads. Six centuries ago, the substance was known in Western Europe as *Opium Thebaicum*, or the "Theban tincture." Prosper Alpinus states that the whole of Egypt was supplied, at the epoch of his visit, from Sajeth,

on the site of the ancient hundred-gated city. And since a large proportion of the upper classes were undisguised opium-eaters, the demand must have been considerable. Now it was precisely in Thebes that Helen, according to Diodorus, received the sorrow-soothing drug from her Egyptian hostess; while the women of Thebes, and they only, still in his time preserved the secret of its qualities and preparation. Can we doubt that the ancient nepenthes was in truth no other than the mediæval Theban tincture? Even stripping from the statement of Diodorus all historical value, its legendary significance remains. It proves, beyond question, the existence of a tradition localising the gift of Polydamna in a spot noted, from the date of the earliest authentic information on the subject, for the production of a modern equivalent. The inference seems irresistible that the two were one, and that, as De Quincey said, Homer is rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium.

NOTES BY A RAMBLER.

I HAVE always thought that, if a traveller will keep his ears open and leave Nature alone, he may still find much to tell though he visits the most frequented spots abroad. "In travelling," said Dr. Johnson, "the great object of remark is human life!" People of all countries and all kinds are brought together, some of whom have not been civilized down to insignificance. My only rule in travelling is to shun the society of my countrymen. Of them I see quite enough at home. In fact, proud as all Englishmen will be of sharing in the honour of "Chatham's language" and "Wolfe's great name," yet, by our compatriots is it not possible at times to get just a little bored? Perhaps the foreigners are not all better, but variety is pleasing even in dulness; and if one must listen to platitudes how much less flat do they sound in French! It is astonishing with what pleasure two men can in that charming language impart to each other truths which have passed current in the world almost since the days of Adam. That enterprising Swiss landlord, who, in hopes of catching Englishmen, entitled his house *Hôtel des Anglais et Pension Goddam* would set his snare for me in vain. If my hotel is very full of my countrymen, I take my seat at the foreigners' table. The landlord always tries to sort his guests according to their nationalities, but this process I always for my own part resist. It has thus been my fortune to know people of many nations, and even to become very intimate with some of them. Into their thoughts I try to enter. The John Bull that is in me I keep in the background, being when with them much more anxious to learn than to teach. Others may say with old Meynell: "For anything I see, foreigners are fools." I prefer to see as much of

them as possible, and to get them to talk, keeping notes of what I see and hear. In these notes let me hope there may be something found to interest my readers.

I witnessed a strange scene on the twenty-second day of last March, the Emperor William's ninetieth birthday. I was seated with my party in the midst of Germans. On one side of me were seven or eight ladies, all of them *Vons*; on the other, a family of German Jews. The head of it was a young man who had distinguished himself at the University, and had published a work of great merit. He had deliberately chosen the life of a student in preference to business, and had broken down in health from too much study. His doctors gave him hopes that after six months' rest he might return to his University, and continue the course of lectures which he had begun to deliver. In sentiments he was the most German of Germans. His greatest regret was that, when he presented himself to serve his one year in the army, he had been rejected on account of defective sight. Prince Bismarck he looked upon as the greatest man living. He was full of enthusiasm about the Emperor's birthday. He presented us with blue corn-flowers and ribbons to wear, and he had a wreath of laurels woven to decorate the table. He even induced the cook to serve up a cream which should represent the German colours. We entered into the spirit of the day, talked with the Germans of our common forefathers on the shores of the Baltic, spoke of Elsass, Lothringen, and Karl the Great, and, in fact, as much as our memory served us, followed the teaching of Professor Freeman.

The dinner had scarcely begun when

a great bowl of punch was brought in and set by the side of the eldest of the female *Vons*. "Ah!" said I to the amiable German lady who sat next to me, "this is what we call in England a loving cup. At our feasts also it circulates round the table. I have myself partaken of it with my Lord Mayor." (This I said with an air of impressive pride.) "It is delightful to see one more proof that the two great nations come from a common source." Unfortunately the proof failed, as proofs so often will fail, just when it seemed on the point of being complete. The vast Teutonic loving-cup stopped short of me, and then returned on the other side of the table to the elderly spinster *Von*. Not a drop reached the German Jews.

The fish was served; and according to the German custom, it was time for the first toast. The Professor at once rose, and in a short, but spirited speech, gave the health of Kaiser Wilhelm. Some of the elderly *Vons* looked as sour as the sourest Rhenish wine; however, we all stood up, clinked glasses, and cried *Hoch*, though in tones that struck me as being subdued. Our English hurrahs, I thought, would have been far louder. A few minutes later the Professor in his loyal enthusiasm jumped up and hastened into the kitchen to inspect the cream, and see that the colours in it were set in proper order. In most parts of the room there was the buzz of conversation, but I had become suddenly aware that another speech was being made. The elderly female *Von* had ladled out glasses of punch for all the other *Vons*, and, just as if the Emperor's health had never been drunk, was giving it over again. A Jew might be German enough to be knocked on the head in fighting the Kaiser's battles, but was not German enough to be allowed to propose the Kaiser's health. The speech, which was soon over, was followed by the shrillest of *Hochs*. None of the guests but myself had noticed what was going on. They were startled by this

almost unearthly cry, which was indeed eager and shrill when compared with the feeble cheer raised at the Professor's toast. The amazement of some English people seated at another table was excessive. Two young Oxonians who were present could not have looked more astonished had they seen the Vice-Chancellor and the two Proctors playing at leap-frog down the High Street. They were students of history. It was one of the best lessons in practical history, I thought, that they were likely ever to get: they would understand the *Judenhass*, if nothing else. The young fellows were so much disgusted at the treatment shown to the Jews, that the next day they invited them to tea. They did not, moreover, seem much distressed when they learned in the morning that the elderly female *Von* was suffering from that head-ache which, even among good Christians and good Jew-haters, will sometimes follow on punch and patriotism.

Ludicrous though the scene was in many ways, yet at the time it was one of the most painful at which I have ever been present. Never had I with my own eyes seen painted in more hateful colours that insolent race-hatred which has caused so much of the misery of mankind. Yet the chief offender was, in the narrow round that she daily paced, a good woman. She was devoted in her care of a sick niece, whom she had adopted: her attendance at church and at church-bazaars was exemplary: her orthodoxy was beyond question. In the Lutheran version of the Acts of the Apostles perhaps the story of the trance into which Peter fell, and of the vision which he saw, has been accidentally omitted. If it has, a good deal of German intolerance is accounted for. "Are they Hebrews? So am I," kept sounding in my ears. It was a happy thing for Paul that his wanderings, wide as they were, did not lead him into the Fatherland.

The Catholics, if they were not looked upon with aversion, yet were, I

found, much more dreaded by my German acquaintances than the Jews. They were more dangerous citizens, it was held, even than the socialists, and were a set of traitors. This opinion was shared by a certain Prussian colonel who had served in the war of 1866. On his return from the victorious campaign against Austria, his division of the army entered a small district of Silesia inhabited by Catholics. The inhabitants, Prussians though they were, looked at them sullenly. Had the army been beaten they would, my friend felt sure, have treated them as enemies. When they reached the first Protestant village everything was changed. The greatest joy was shown, and they were feasted by the people. A friend of his from the Rhine provinces, a young officer in the army, who was a boy at the time of the Franco-German War, when the news arrived of the victory of Wörth, ran with joy into his father's mill to bear the tidings to the workmen. They were all Catholics. One of them seized him roughly by the shoulders, crying out, "You lie, it cannot be true!" All the men, he said, were vexed at the news.

In the spring of the present year, at the time of the threat of war with France, the Germans were very anxious. My friend, the learned Jew, seemed to think that as war was inevitable, it might be wiser to attack France while she was still unprepared. But the colonel, who knew the caprices of the god of battles, and his horrors too, was anxious for peace. Still more anxious were the women. "Ah!" said a gentle maiden, "this dreadful war!" and she confided to us, with a sigh, that the moment it was declared her three brothers and her betrothed would have to shoulder the rifle and march off. I thought of Jeannette and Jeanot, and fell to humming to myself:

"If I were King of France,
Or what's better, Pope of Rome,
I'd have no fighting men abroad,
No weeping maids at home."

"Our position is a very difficult one," the colonel would say, "with the French on one side and the Russians on the other." I mentioned to him that a German lady had told me that her mother, who lived through the wars of Napoleon, used to say that she would rather have to do with the French as enemies, than with the Russians as friends. He agreed with her, much though his family had suffered from the rapacity of some of the French officers who had been quartered on them. It had more than once happened that one of these gentry had let it be known that things would go by no means smoothly in the household unless each day he found a piece of gold under his napkin at dinner. Such rascals as these were not, however, common. When the Russians entered Germany as allies, a regiment of Cossacks bivouacked on his grandfather's estate. They took all the cows out of the sheds, and having slaughtered them, roasted the flesh at a great fire in the court-yard of the house, dancing round it like the savages that they were. It was useless to complain to the officers, for they were as wild as the men.

A Frenchman, whom I came across, did not seem nearly so apprehensive of war as my colonel. He was a stout, eager, friendly man, who, unlike most of the Germans, had no thawing process to pass through before he could arrive at familiar intercourse. He began to speak of the French soldiers. "The English," he said, "were always so firm, but the French were only good if they were well led. Their commanders must go before them, and then they would always follow. With a good leader they had never been beaten. Such a man was Boulanger: with him we will go round the world — *nous ferons le tour du monde*. He was hated by the rich because he laid the burthen of war equally on all. He demanded, no doubt, a large sum of money for his autumn campaign. But what of that? *Nous le voulons*. We will have the money spent, and

we are ready to pay it." "But," I asked, "has the great Boulanger ever held any high command? Have you experienced generals like the Germans?" "The French general," he cried, "is made on the spur of the moment. Look at '98: Hoche, Kleber, Kellermann and the rest sprang up in a moment. Under Boulanger we shall have our revenge."

A few years ago I passed some months in an hotel with an old French gentleman who loved to talk of his early days. What changes he had seen! In his childhood he had been brought up by his aunt, an old nun, who in the Reign of Terror had narrowly escaped the guillotine. He had been sent to Paris and apprenticed to a goldsmith. He had been harshly treated till he grew strong enough to use his fists, and he had not failed to use them. Broken though he was with illness, and gentle though he showed himself towards those whom he liked, he was still a fiery, truculent old fellow. How he longed, he once told me, for his youth, that he might insult a young German who sat on the opposite side of the dinner-table, and then fight a duel with him with swords. He had fought many a duel in his younger days, in the seven years in which he had served in the cavalry, for he had shown his indenture a fair pair of heels, and had enlisted. The life he had found a very hard one, for the soldiers in those days were badly fed. He was always hungry. Each day's ration of bread was served out once in the twenty-four hours. The recruits would often eat it all at one meal, and were famished before the morrow. The older men, before they ate a mouthful, would cut off the proper portion for their breakfast, and put the rest away in a locker. There were still some veterans left of Napoleon's army, who had learnt the tricks of campaigning, and taught the younger men to go out into the fields and steal potatoes and carrots. "What rascals we were!" he would say with a sigh. Now and then a man got some money from home.

Even if he had wished he was never suffered to keep it for himself, it soon disappeared in a common feast. What tricks he had played! With his skill in the use of tools he had managed to remove a bar in one of the windows of the barracks, and used to slip out at nights. Their jolliest time was during the French occupation of Belgium in 1830. His troop was stationed near the frontier. Every time that he and his comrades had to cross the borders they smuggled lace. For each packet they were paid five francs. The custom-house officers at first tried to stop them, but they frightened the poor fellows out of their wits, and were suffered to come and go as they pleased. He soon grew weary of the service, and repented of his folly in enlisting. He longed for the comforts of life, and a decent mode of living. A few months before the end of his time of service he received one day a letter from a notary, telling him that a distant relation was dead who had left him a legacy of one thousand pounds. His first thought was to have a course of feasting, his next to buy himself out of the army. He did neither one nor the other. He bought himself a watch, and did not spend a *sou* of his treasure on anything else. If he once began to draw on it, all his chance of arriving at an independent fortune would, he felt, be gone. When he was free from the army he purchased a partnership in a small goldsmith's business in Paris. He soon frightened his old partner by his daring enterprize, and hardly reassured the old fellow even when at the end of the year the balance-sheet showed that the profits were nearly doubled. He came over to England to try and pick up some of the secrets of our art, for in many respects the French goldsmiths were behind ours. He was shown through a workshop at Manchester, feigning complete ignorance of the processes that he inspected. There for the first time he saw gas used in melting metals. He tried to introduce it in his own workshop, but in Paris, in those days,

there was no supply of gas in the daytime. The company could not be persuaded to give him one, so that he was forced to manufacture it himself.

He had seen all the revolutions and street-fighting beginning with the days of Charles the Tenth. He had been an officer in the National Guard, and had an old soldier's hearty contempt for that body. He was half angry, and half amused as he told us how on one occasion his commanding officer had headed the flight from a barricade upon which their company suddenly came. My old friend and two or three veterans found themselves left alone. The officer wrote such a brilliant account of his own doings that he got decorated. After the revolution of 1848 there came some very bad days for trade. The rich foreigners did not dare to come to Paris, and the goldsmiths' shops were unfrequented. He was unwilling to discharge his workmen, but he had scarcely anything for them to do. The Government, moreover, was as unwilling as himself to have workmen turned loose on the streets. An ingenious thought struck him. He had in his shop a great number of manufactured pieces of goldwork on which the duty had been paid. He set aside those on which much art had been employed, and offered to the Government to melt down all the rest, if the duty already paid on them were returned. In that case he could find employment for all his hands, though not at the same rate of wages. The offer was accepted. The men he employed in manufacturing the badges that were needed for the newly-formed National Guards. The money that he received by the gold that he sold he invested in the French funds, which were greatly depressed. He felt confidence in his country, and was sure that they would rise. The result was that he kept all his men till the goldsmiths' trade revived, and cleared a considerable sum by his investment. He had stayed in Paris during all the siege, but had not suffered quite so

much as most people, as with the forethought of an old campaigner he had laid up a good store of provisions. He sighed over the recollection of his cellar of wine. "I thought," he said, "that the Prussians or the mob would drink it, and so I began at once with my finest qualities. By the end of the siege I had only my *vin ordinaire* left." He laughed heartily as he told me how, one day, when out walking with his old wife, she had suddenly opened her parasol as a defence against a bombshell which almost fell at their feet. Fortunately for them it buried itself in the ground and did not explode. My old friend is dead now; peace be to his ashes! With all his fierceness against the Prussians he had a warm heart. I shall never forget how a tear started to the old fellow's eye as my wife offered him a beautiful nosegay on his birthday.

My friend, the German colonel, had perhaps seen the shell fired that had scared the old lady, for he had been at the siege of Paris. He was stationed at Saint Cloud. Once in every four nights he was on duty at the outposts. There he had a little cottage which was shared by his aide-de-camp and the doctor. He had a bed with no sheets, but, as he slept in his boots and spurs, they were of less importance. His coverlet was of velvet embroidered with gold, with the monogram of the Empress Eugenie worked on it. He showed me a bundle of letters which he had found in the palace, one bearing Bourbaki's signature. They were interesting, though of no importance—orders to prepare rooms for the Prince Imperial, directions about the festival on the Emperor's birthday, examinations of charges brought against some of the officials, and so on. The strange thing was that in a Prussian soldier's apartment, an Englishman should be reading these private documents of the French court. My friend had been at Sedan. His division was on the extreme wing of the army that came up from Paris. The fog lifted soon after

they reached the heights above the little town, and let them see, on the other side of the valley, the puffs of smoke which told them that artillery-fire was going on. So little did they know how entirely they had surrounded the enemy, that they thought the French were retreating into Belgium pursued by the Germans. Even on the morrow of the battle they did not know the full measure of their success. They noticed a general of division who galloped up with a face so red and an air so excited, that they thought that his head had been a little turned by the battle. When he cried out that Napoleon and the whole French army had surrendered, they no longer doubted about his madness. A French captain of artillery a little while before had come up to ask for information about a wounded officer. Though he, of course, knew the full extent of the defeat, he could not keep from swaggering. "We are going to begin again," he said. "Ah! it is a terrible thing killing men, but—" my friend turned his back on this braggart, and walked off. He was the most modest of men, and loved truth as much as any Englishman. He was proud of a long line of warrior forefathers, and showed me their commissions, spreading over more than a century and a half. There were the signatures of every king of Prussia, the great Frederick's, and the great Frederick's stern old father's. My colonel's father had fought at Ligny when he was but a boy of sixteen, and his great-grandfather had been killed by a Russian cannon shot in 1759. He himself had served against Austria in 1866. One evening, quite at the opening of the campaign, when they were close to the frontiers but still in Prussia, a false alarm was raised that the enemy was at hand. They passed the night in the field ready for action. There was a dreadful storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, which went on till morning. The tired soldiers lay down on the bare and soaking ground, for no shelter was to be had. He covered

himself up in his waterproof cloak as well as he could, and got a little sleep. The next evening he and some of the officers of his regiment were feasted in the country house of a Prussian gentleman, for they had not yet crossed the frontiers. They had a great variety of courses and abundance of champagne, and luxurious beds to sleep on. For many days after this their chief fare was bread, haricot beans, and coffee, with hard fighting almost every day. They were far worse fed in this war than four years later in France, as they were in a much poorer country.

Another French friend of mine, an elderly gentleman, had a very different story to tell. His grandfather had escaped the guillotine by flight to England, and had only returned on the Restoration. He himself had had his *château* occupied by the Prussians night after night for many weeks. It was a melancholy thing to have to receive the enemies of his country, but he must admit that they had behaved well. He often had to provide dinner and beds for six or eight officers, but only one ever grumbled. This over-nice German complained that the sheets of his bed were not quite clean, but as he slept in his boots and spurs he was perhaps a little fastidious. There was indeed a great difficulty in getting the linen washed in time, so frequent were the changes of their invading guests. It rarely happened that the same set were quartered on them two nights running. In their first alarm they had dug holes in their cellar and buried many of their valuables. The precaution proved worse than useless, for there was not the slightest attempt at plundering, and many of the things thus buried were spoilt by rust or rats. Food, indeed, with wine and cigars they were forced to supply: their horses and carriages also were seized wherever they could be found. My friend had sent off his to a forest at no great distance. The horses were stabled in a woodcutter's hut, and the carriage was hidden under a great pile of wood. One wintry day,

when nothing had been seen of the Germans for a week or two, the horses were brought back so that they might be better looked after. The alarm was suddenly raised that the enemy was entering the village. The groom went off at a gallop with the horses to the old hiding-place in the forest, but in the fresh-fallen snow their traces were left. The whole family turned out, master, mistress, men, women and children to sweep away the marks. Happily, before the first Prussians arrived, there was nothing to be seen but a newly swept path through the snow. My friend complained, as all Frenchmen do complain, of treachery. The telegraph-instruments and the railway-tools that had been buried in the ground, were betrayed. A farmer had hidden away some hundreds of sheep in the forest: the hiding-place was revealed. There were envious scoundrels who would give hints to the enemy to dig in such and such places, and they would find something. There was, at the same time, such a willingness to suspect that every passer-by was a spy, that my friend's coachman was one day accused of being a Prussian in a village, at no great distance from his master's home, through which he had often driven for twenty-five years.

The Prussians, too, were not without their suspicions. The first evening that any of them appeared, when they were seated at dinner, a soldier came into the dining-room, and whispered something to a major who was the senior officer present. He struck the table with his hand, and turning to his hostess said in a stern tone, "Madame, one of your people has poisoned one of my men. We shall hold a court-martial in the morning, and if the charge is proved we shall shoot the fellow on the spot." The doctor of the regiment at once left the table. All that night my friend could not sleep. He heard the slow step of the sentry pacing up and down in front of the house, and he thought of the villager who most likely would not

see the sun set that was so soon to rise. Happily the German doctor and officers were just men, and not fools blinded with suspicion. The soldier did not die, though he was very ill. He had asked the peasant in whose house he was quartered for a drink. He had scarcely drunk a mouthful when he fell down insensible, whereupon the peasant threw down the glass and so scattered what was left of the liquid. The doctor, however, came to the conclusion that the man's attack had nothing to do with what he had drunk, and that the peasant in his fright had acted like a hasty fool.

At Strasbourg I saw last May the two races together, and it was a melancholy sight. The streets swarmed with soldiers hurrying hither and thither. How hard they were worked, and how tired they often looked, as in their dirt-stained and weather-beaten uniforms they came back from their drill. There was no show about them, and no swagger. In the public places they were lounging about, but there was no friendly intercourse with the inhabitants, no chatting with the nursemaids. I watched carefully in the four days that I spent in the town, but only once saw a common soldier speaking to a woman. In our hotel, which was chiefly frequented by the French, a man in uniform now and then came in for a meal, but no one spoke to him. I sat next to an actress, an Italian lady who was proud of her English. "What a *dommage*!" she would now and then exclaim. I asked her in French whether the two nations would sit together in the theatre. She looked hurriedly round, and in such English as she could muster made me understand that these were matters about which she did not care to speak. The waiters were shy of talking if there was any one in the room. Every Frenchman arriving in the town was required to report himself to the police within forty-eight hours. We Englishmen were not troubled. Neither the clerk at the central post-office who

sold the stamps, nor the guard on the railway could speak a word of French. The Alsatians, it is true, generally speak German, but business-relations still exist with France, and Frenchmen are constantly visiting their old province. It seemed harsh in the Government not to provide officials who could speak both languages. I was shown over the grand new University by a friendly Swiss whom I chanced to meet. There were but six hundred students, he said, and the number was falling, for the Alsatians would not come to a University which had been founded, they maintained, as a badge of their conquest. They went rather to Heidelberg, or any of the older German Universities.

One mark of German brutality I saw with indignation and disgust. Three gross-looking students, with their heavy faces gashed with sabre-cuts, embarked on the Rhine steamer at Bonn. Bardolph himself would have looked a decent fellow in the presence of the leader of the set, who was swollen with beer and freshly scarred on his hideous face. One of his comrades had cloths bound round his neck and head. They at once called for beer, and sat down to play at cards. Their insolent faces showed how proud they were of their brutal, stupid persons. An American gentleman who was standing by me, looking at the grossest of the three, said that if such a fellow were at a University in the States they would stick pins in him. I should have been content with getting him well into the middle of a "scrimmage" at football in the parks at Oxford.

After seeing such brutal fellows as these it was pleasant to fall in with a simple, honest undergraduate of Louvain, who was going home for

his Whitsuntide holidays. He told me of the quarrels that within the last two years had come to a head in the University between the Flemings and the Walloons. They often came to blows: he had himself seen glasses thrown in the taverns. If the police interfered, both parties at once joined against their common enemy. In one point they were united to a man—they were all Catholics. When I remarked that fighting might be very Catholic, but was not very Christian, he laughed heartily, and pleaded that they were very young. This rivalry, he said, only existed among the upper classes, the workpeople never troubling their heads about it. It was an affair of race-sentiment. There was a demand that the professors should lecture in Flemish. This, my informant said, was absurd, Fleming though he himself was, for all the students understood French. There had lately been a great open-air socialist meeting, which the students had resolved to break up by force. They had advanced to the attack singing the *Brabançonne*, the national air of Belgium. The socialists struck up some of their songs in reply. Then the attack began. "What was the result?" I eagerly asked. He laughed as he answered, "There was no result. Each side was afraid of the other, and so they never met." "Had the police interfered?" I inquired. "There was no need, as both forces retired simultaneously." How happy it would be not only for France and Germany, but for Europe and the world, if the two great nations that are now so sternly facing each other, almost ready for deadly fight, could, like these simple students and honest workmen, entertain a wholesome mutual fear, and retire simultaneously!

ACROSS THE DIVIDE ON A BUCK-BOARD.

"BREAKFAST! Break-*fast!*" roared the negro "Boots" of the Trinidad hotel. His announcement was made with such abruptness, and so close to my ear, that I started violently; and a large cake of soap I was manipulating at the moment flew from my hands, striking the upturned nose of a recumbent passenger with considerable force, and promptly arousing him from a deep and pleasant slumber.

In spite of its consequences, however, the negro's shout was a very welcome one. For the whole of the previous day we had slowly made our way over a rough brand-new railway track, and had then spent the night supperless in the coffee-room of a small hotel, reposing uneasily upon our baggage. Breakfast, we all felt, should end our troubles. Even the man whose nose was smarting from the sharp contact with my soap, after a candid expression of opinion regarding my future destiny, lost no time in putting on his boots and answering the summons.

Trinidad is a town in Southern Colorado. When I was there ten years ago it was the terminus of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé railroad—a line which has since stretched its long arms south-westward a thousand miles, and reached the sea. In those days folk going south of Trinidad had to coach to Santa Fé, and take to the saddle if they wished to go further.

I now intend, for the benefit of those unacquainted with "staging" in the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains, to describe this journey across the Divide (or ridge of mountains separating Colorado and New Mexico) which was undertaken by myself, the man with the bruised nose, and two others.

It was an experience not easily to be forgotten.

We were not long over breakfast. Though the beef-steak was tough, and the coffee so hot that it threatened to crack the stoneware it was served in, our teeth were good and our appetites keen, and in half an hour we were making our last preparations for the journey. It was a quarter before seven when, having paid my bill, I strolled forth to inspect the stage, which I was told had been brought to the door in readiness for the start.

My anticipations of this coach-journey were of the most lively description. I had read Bret Harte assiduously, and the wild doings of his inimitable Yuba Bill were fresh in my memory. Alas! for the difference between romance and reality. There were no handsome steeds with flowing manes and tails: no coach with high box seat, or swarthy driver in picturesque costume, armed with rifle and bowie knife. In place of these were four lean wicked-looking mules, a long low vehicle with spidery wheels and no springs, and a quiet little man, dressed in brown canvas and black hat, plaiting the end of a queer whip with a short handle and a long lash. These whips are peculiar to the country: they closely resemble magnified dog-whips, and partly from their appearance, and partly from the execution they can do when wielded by an experienced hand, they are known by an expressive name—"black snake."

I was gazing blankly at this disappointing arrangement when a fellow-passenger from the East, a native of Trinidad, touched my shoulder. He was a taciturn person, and in reply to my greeting nodded, and, pointing to the coach, said laconically:

"Goin' by it?"

"Ye—es, I suppose so," I replied. "But what a queer concern it is: not at all the sort of coach we have in England."

"Coach! They only bring that out when there's more'n four passengers: this is a buck-board. A handy trap fur a rough road though, specially with John Forster to hold the lines."

I looked at the little man in brown doubtfully. "Is he to be the driver?"

My companion eyed me steadily for a moment without speaking: he had noticed my dubious tone. Presently he said with great deliberation and emphasis: "That is John Forster, sir, who has shot more men than I have rabbits: the best all-round stage-driver on the frontier, and one of the hardest old cusses alive. Ah! he's gettin' up. Goin' on the box with him? Then, look here, keep your tongue straight an' even. He ain't a bad 'un if took the right way; but rub his hair for'ards, and he's a demon! Adios, adios."

It was seven o'clock. I was beside the stage-driver now, and the other passengers in place behind us. As the smart hotel-clock struck the hour, Forster passed his whip lightly over the long ears of his team, they plunged into a swinging trot, and away we went, fairly launched upon our journey across the Divide.

The first thing which struck me as we passed along a well-worn wagon-track, with high walls of jagged rocks on either side, was, that what our team lacked in beauty they made up in go; and that though the buck-board, from the circumstances of its construction, jolted me about until I felt like a half empty sack of potatoes, it was proceeding at a rate which fell little short of any idea I had formed of Yuba Bill's mail. This was comforting; and in spite of certain unpleasantly-convincing signs that I had eaten my breakfast with injudicious haste, I began to feel that this drive was going to be an interesting experience. It was not

until we had been travelling some forty minutes, however, that the sense of physical discomfort gave way to genuine enjoyment. Then, for a time, all petty inconvenience was forgotten in delighted contemplation of the magnificent panorama before me.

The walls of rock, which at first completely blocked our view, had receded by degrees, and we could now see north, west, and south, as far as the clear thin air would allow—a considerable distance at this altitude. Before us, stretching south-westward in broad curves, was the road we were to travel, winding over hill and dale like a white snake. On all sides were mountains, thickly covered with cedar and pine forests. These hills were, in most instances, curious-looking objects, being bare of all vegetation at the top and perfectly flat, as though deftly cut and pared by a giant's knife. At times the forests which clothed them would give way to long terraces of rock and deeply-cut ravines; down which torrents of melted snow thunder in early spring, swelling the river below into a broad and dangerous stream. At this time of the year, however (September), it was the narrowest of silver threads.

But though the mountains round and about us were grand and wild in their way—none less than ten thousand feet in height, and many far more—the eye only rested upon them for a moment. Far, far away, to the north-west, dwarfing these foot-hills into utter insignificance, were the peaks of the great snowy range. There, flashing in the bright sunlight, clothed in their white mantles that the sun may never melt, were the Spanish Peaks, Pike's Peak, and many another Rocky Mountain height—a sight which the dullest man living could not look upon for the first time without deep emotion. For my own part, I gave a wild exclamation of delight, as one of my most cherished dreams was now realised beyond all expectation. To my great surprise, the grim little stage-driver turned at the sound, and spoke to me with a pleasant twinkle

in his eye. Up to this moment he had preserved a silence that I had not dared to break.

"Ay, stranger, they are worth a trip from the East, ain't they? Not many of their sort where you come from, eh?"

"No, indeed!"

"Ah"—Forster was now nodding his head after the manner of a happy father, when his first-born is being justly appreciated. "I've run this stage ten year, day out and in, and I'm used to most things on my way; yet each time I make this p'int o' the road, and catch sight of them peaks a-glinting thar in the sun, it seems—it really does seem, as if 'twas my first journey. Peaks like them, sir, never get monotonous."

The driver here paused to insert the thin end of the black snake in a workmanlike manner between the ears of one of his leaders, who was inclined to fall into reveries and leave the pulling to his neighbour. I felt highly flattered at the condescension this long speech implied, and presently made bold to ask a few questions about the country, all of which were answered so readily and politely that I began to think Forster's character had been maligned.

All this time we were trotting steadily up and down hill. We met nothing but a few teams, drawing wagons heavily laden with hides and sheepskins. These teams, however, were troublesome enough to us, for our near leader seemed to have an unconquerable objection to them, and it required great skill and address on the part of the driver to persuade her to pass them in a decorous manner. He never failed to accomplish this, however, and after two hours' steady travel we reached the top of a long steep hill. Here, Forster briefly informed us, was the dividing point between Colorado and New Mexico. We had now to make our way to the plains, and our course, therefore, for many miles would be almost entirely down hill. Our troubles were now to begin. A man of observant mind

might have guessed this by the care with which Forster examined his harness before going further, and the decided way in which he insisted upon a re-arrangement of our baggage, previously stowed somewhat loosely. Most significant of all, however, was a brief remark made as he swung himself into his seat, and took the reins from me: "Those that don't want leaving behind had better keep a tight hold of something solid."

A moment later we were careering swiftly down hill. The road became narrower and the incline steeper as we proceeded, and we had sharper corners to turn than ever before. Worst of all, the ox-wagons, which had met us hitherto one at a time, now passed in detachments, irritating the near leader to such an extent that I expected her to burst the traces every minute. The scenery now lost all charm. My attention was concentrated upon John Forster, in whose hands I felt distinctly the safety of our lives and limbs actually lay. From this moment I began to appreciate the force of the Trinidad man's remarks. "A hard old cuss" was a most desirable kind of person for such work as this, and the stage-driver did not belie his reputation. His small body, like Napoleon's, held a mighty soul.

We had no brake, and the descent was now exceedingly steep; yet the team was kept well in hand, and the attention required for this did not prevent Forster from forcibly reminding the near leader that her antipathy to oxen must be kept within decent bounds, under penalties. In spite of our driver's skill and power, however, the buck-board was more than once within an ace of an upset. Here and there, in the middle of the road, were boulders and loose stones, upon which our wheels bumped at intervals with such force that we passengers were as nearly as possible all pitched bodily out, like so many India-rubber balls. The folk inside suffered more than I did, I believe, though they had each other to hold on to. They had no

steadfast pillar of strength before them to gather courage and confidence from, in the shape of a stage-driver, as I had; and they could not make due preparation for a bad place, being unable to see distinctly what was before them. Then, the road was of an insidious and variable disposition. After a series of awful jumps and concussions, there would be a prolonged lull of smooth travelling; and then the jolting would begin again with tenfold force, just as the unwary had ceased to hold on. Many and deep were the groans and curses which reached the ears of Forster and myself, these ejaculations coming with especial vigour from the man who had been awakened by my soap. More than once he called upon the driver to stop, reviling him and his driving in no measured terms. Forster, however, did not pay the slightest attention to the appeal; and by and by, a long stretch of soft ground intervening, the complaints and objurgations ceased.

Alas! this state of things was not fated to last; indeed, this part of the road may be accurately compared to a river, which runs with sleek delightful smoothness just before it breaks into boiling rapids.

If I had done my duty I should have shouted a warning, for as we turned a corner the road dipped abruptly, and I could see, fifty yards away, one of those dry watercourses already mentioned, which we should now have to cross. I was too much dismayed, however, at the prospect to have presence of mind for anything but to set my teeth, and grip the hand-rail like grim death. By Forster's action I could see a crisis was at hand, for he dropped his whip and with a quick turn of the wrist wound the reins twice round his hands, at the same time placing his feet firmly against the foot-board. The mules now broke into a gallop, and we spun towards the old river-bed with terrible speed. With his whole weight thrown backwards to keep up the

heads of his team, Forster coolly allowed them to go their own pace. We reached the bank: down plunged the mules, the buck-board following pell-mell, arriving at the bottom in a sound state by some miracle as it seemed to me, and with a bump, to which all we had hitherto experienced was mere child's play. Now came a rough scramble over the gravelly river-bottom and then the ascent. This was the critical moment. For the first time Forster spoke to his mules. "Git up thar!" he yelled, in a voice of thunder. The leaders were already half-way up the opposite bank, and right gallantly was the driver's call answered by the team. But the strain was too much; the soil was soft and yielding, and down came the leaders on their noses. Had the shafters followed, we should have been done for, the ground we stood on being of a quicksand nature. Luckily they kept their feet. "Up, boys," shrieked Forster again, giving the reins a "lift" that brought the leaders to their feet in the twinkling of an eye. And now these four mules laid themselves down to their work as only mules can. As if by instinct they placed their feet in the only place where there was a chance of finding firm ground, and they knew exactly how to make the weight of their long lean bodies tell. There was a prolonged strain: a swinging billowy motion as the buck-board moved at last and ploughed its way through sand nearly a foot deep: one dreadful moment as we reached the brow of the steep bank, and seemed likely to topple backwards, and bring the mules on the top of us: a final mighty bump—and we were safe at last on the level ground above.

Here we paused for breath, and Forster and I turned round to ascertain the position of affairs inside. A most deplorable spectacle met our eyes. At first all we saw was a confused mass of arms and legs waving wildly. Then appeared the head of the man of soapy memory, who was coughing and

choking in a most dreadful manner. The reason for this was found to have been a reckless yielding to a desire for tobacco. Tempted to believe his troubles over, just before we reached the river he lit a cigar. When the first tremendous jolt occurred, the head of his opposite neighbour came into violent collision with his own, and the cigar was nearly driven down his throat. The consequences which followed may be conceived. In a short time the man recovered power of speech. He was in a boiling rage, and the amount of Biblical quotation which fell from his lips was simply appalling. It was all aimed, too, at the head of the stage-driver. John Forster eyed his abuser attentively, and made no remark whatever until his long vocabulary was exhausted. Then he said quietly :

"Young man, you want to drive this team, yourself?"

"I could not do it worse than you."

"Here are the lines, then. We've two more bad places to cross," Forster gravely held out the reins. The passenger looked a trifle foolish.

"I—can't drive myself."

"Oh," was the contemptuous answer, "I did not suppose you could. I only wanted to know accurately how many kinds of a fool you were. Now listen, you blamed, tenderfooted, sourkraut, you! I didn't put these creeks in the way; and if you don't approve of 'em you'd better git out when we reach the next one."

"I intend to."

"Oh, you do? Good. Of course I sha'n't wait for you on the other side: and look here,—should you change your mind, don't you whimper and cuss again. If I hear so much as a single whine, out you go, to walk the rest of the way. Now you know!"

With this threat, delivered with an earnestness and severity sufficiently impressive, the stage-driver whipped up his mules, and we continued our journey. The two bad places turned out to be of a much milder character than the first one, and no further complaint was heard of Forster's driving; though I am morally certain that many times he made a dead set at an ugly boulder with the sole purpose of upsetting his passenger's equanimity.

By three in the afternoon the plains of New Mexico were reached, and the necessity "to hold on to something solid" became a thing of the past. Two hours later I took leave of Forster. He shook hands with a good-humoured nod; but as I walked away I heard him remark to a friend, in a particularly audible tone:

"Johnny, we'd as derved a lot of fools aboard this time as ever you see. They went fairly sick at Bolt Creek. The boy on the box was the only one who kep' his mouth shut. I tell you what, lad, the next cargo I take shall have cord-nettin' spread over 'em. Blamed ef it ain't the only way to treat these bletherin' calves!"

A. H. PATERSON.

THE PROFESSION OF LETTERS.

(A POSTSCRIPT.)

I AM glad, my dear George, that you have found my letter amusing. I had hoped you might also have found it useful; but that hope, when one considers it, was idle, for, after all, its usefulness, if any, can only, like vaccination or Monsieur Pasteur's treatment for hydrophobia, be proved hereafter. Nor do I forget your favourite poet's words:

"And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches."

As a supplement to which, however, let me offer you this bit of prose: "Experience is the best schoolmaster, but the fees are apt to be heavy."

Meanwhile, I am well content to have amused you, which indeed is much. The world wags but dully in these days, and we should be thankful to any one who amuses us without too curiously asking what he means. How unreasonable is it, for instance, to be angry with those ingenuous young gentlemen who pay each other such pretty compliments in the literary journals. Surely beyond making themselves ridiculous (and Art, you know, should ever be handmaid to Nature) they do harm to no human being, and, rightly considered, should be capable of amusing many. If they carry their complimenting too far, and gratify their own vanity at the expense of their neighbours beyond the pale, then of course it becomes a different matter. Whether there be any who indulge in these dirty tricks, you must find out for yourself; and you will have opportunities of doing so which I have not, and indeed do not miss. An old fellow does not know his way behind your

new scenes, and would be out of place there if he did. Coleridge, when asked if he believed in ghosts, answered that he did not, because he had seen too many of them. I have heard in my time so many allegations of this sort proved on examination to be groundless, that I confess to have grown a little sceptical. An ill-treated author will naturally seek a reason for the treatment everywhere but in his own book. Some such parasites of literature there have no doubt always been since papyrus was first spoiled; but I cannot think them so common as some would make out, especially in these days when the King of Syria can speak no word in his chamber of a morning but some enterprising editor has it in type by sundown. The written word has an awkward knack of remaining: like chickens and curses it comes home to roost at its appointed time, and a man who played these tricks habitually would be pretty sure to be found out—for this reason, if for no other, that he could not be the only one in the secret. There will be many a Junius before there is another Woodfall. But on that sport which the authors of the New English call log-rolling it strikes me that much unnecessary fury has been wasted. At its worst it can impose on no reasonable being; and I shrewdly suspect that those who are most indignant at it are those who cannot get their own logs rolled.

It seems that I have not been so fortunate with others as with you. You tell me that you have shown my letter to several of your friends, and that they did not find it amusing. It is one of these friends possibly who has delivered his soul in the pages of

the *Saturday Review*. He was a little unfeeling, perhaps, in his allusions to my age, a fault I would so gladly have corrected long ago had it been in my power; but I freely forgive him for the sake of his support. Like a good-natured Balaam his mission was to curse me, but he has practically ended by blessing me altogether. Indeed I have been rather startled to find how much nearer the truth my Devil's Advocacy has carried me than I had supposed. Do they still teach logic at Oxford? But in any case your own reason, unaided by the formulas of Mr. Mill, should have no difficulty in detecting the fallacies of an argument which would prove the pleasures of Journalism by the statement that there are many men who have found no other profession open to them, and who would sooner go on writing leading-articles till they drop than live a life of inglorious ease. Possibly there are such men, and no doubt a life of inglorious ease is not to be advocated, though I should fancy it might be enjoyed. Possibly also (and how fortunately for mankind!) there are men who have found no other profession open to them but the dentist's or the chiropodist's, and who would sooner go on extracting our teeth and our corns till they drop, than only unfold their hands once a quarter to draw their dividends. But surely not for this reason would one recommend the profession of a chiropodist or a dentist to a young man with aspirations. However it is probably unnecessary to point out to you that it was less your friend's object to convince than to amuse, and that, let me remind you again, is much. Serious or sublime, picturesque, pathetic, moral, witty, grotesque,—a writer may propose to shine in each or all of these moods, and fail; but if he succeed in entertaining us, no matter by what means, much shall be forgiven him. Whatever else you forget, my dear lad, remember this; but indeed only a very great genius is ever resolutely dull, and then!—as some witty

Frenchman said of Goethe, he succeeds with an astonishing perfection.

But some of your friends, unlike my good Balaam of "the Saturday," have found me, you say, ill-natured, even brutal, and, perhaps worst of all, untrue. These be hard words, Master Shallow! But who are they who have spoken them? If they be of the same age and condition as yourself, what can they know? What can the young barbarians at play know of the stern realities of the circus? Let them tarry till their beards be grown, and then speak. And if they, like your uncle, have passed, and long passed, the age which brings experience if not wisdom, then let them rejoice that Fortune has been kindlier to them than to me; but if they tell you that to support yourself by your pen is the most independent and delightful way of travelling the road of life, that custom will never stale its pleasures nor age wither its possibilities, that every such traveller, not only as the prime promoter of the nations' gaiety but also as their universal guide and philosopher, has won the right of entry into that charmed circle "where Orpheus and where Homer are," then, saving their honourable presences, they are asses,—asses, my boy, supreme and manifest. They may give you the names of a score and more of men they have known who have lived in comfort by their pens, and died content and happy when their time came; but when next they entertain you with this sort of argument, offer them in return this little apologue,—it came from one who knew better than most men all that was included in a literary life. Said a certain wise man once to his foolish friend: "If I come to an orchard and say there's no fruit here; and then comes a poring man who finds two apples and three pears, and tells me, 'Sir, you are mistaken, I have found both apples and pears,' I should laugh at him. Waat would that be to the purpose?" Sure at least of one thing I am: the real workers will never tell you that the

profession of Letters is this easy, joyous, triumphal march through life.

"Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent night's weary hours
Weeping and watching for the morrow,
He knows ye not, ye heavenly Powers!"

But, indeed, it was never my intention to cast any slur on the noble profession of Literature, in which by all means, if your friends wish it, let Journalism be included: it is a profession which, if not the highest, at least includes many clever and good fellows; and in days when the law of Parliament assigns to Mr. Timothy Healy and Mr. Charles Tanner the style of Honourable Gentlemen, it is idle to stand too precisely on verbal distinctions. Many are the charms of Literature, many are its prizes; may they all be yours and your friends'. Yet being, after all is granted, but the work of mortals, however divinely endowed, will it not also have its pains, its griefs, its disappointments? Was it my business to persuade you, a young traveller just starting to climb

"The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar,"

that your journey would be as easy and pleasant as an afternoon's stroll up the Cumnor hills? That had surely been no friend's part. Not for a moment do I deny that the labours of the ascent, though you shall never reach the top, will have its charms.

"The labour we delight in physics pain."

But some labour there must be, some pain. Not every traveller of course has the same story to tell, even though he go over the same ground. Some men will roam the wide world round with their eyes shut: some will find a world in the garden-plot before their door. Some men will think no more of being tossed up and down in Adria than of rolling out to dinner in their broughams: some will be sick to death in crossing the Channel. Life's pilgrimage must be made with peas in our shoes: the wise man boils them,

but he does not deny the peas. Yet some feet of course are tenderer than others. Not every soul will feel the rubs and stings of a literary life—the reviewer's contumely, the editor's delay, and others whereof your own experience will doubtless soon provide you with a list; and it is not the nature of man to waste much pity over feelings he has himself never known. Johnson, you will remember, said (and very truly, if somewhat brutally) of a lady who died heartbroken for the loss of her husband, that a washer-woman, left a widow with nine small children, would never have sobbed herself to death. Some have no feelings, these are happy: others ignore what they cannot help, and these are wise.

"The patient ass, up flinty paths,
Plods with its weary load."

It is doubtless better to be a patient ass than an impatient one; but what sort of an old ass is he who brays out to the light-hearted little donkeys, kicking their heels up in the valley below, that the flints in the path are really primroses, and the load they must carry is no more than thistle-down? And what, let me ask you again, do these same little donkeys know of the long road that lies before them?

Consider this again. There are men who will sit down at the first resting-place, and abide there with perfect contentment, persuading themselves that they have reached their journey's end. And these are wise souls, too, after their kind. If you wish to join them, I make no objection: only know where you are and what you are doing. Have you quite forgotten these two stanzas from a poem you were once so fond of quoting?

"Once, like us, you took your station
Watchers for a purer fire;
But you drooped in expectation
And you wearied in desire.
When the first rose flush was steeping
All the fore peak's awful crown,
Shepherds say they found you sleeping
In some windless valley farther down.

"Then you wept and, slowly raising,
Your dozed eyelids, sought again,
Half in doubt, they say, and gazing
Sadly back, the seats of men—
Snatch'd a turbid inspiration
From some transient earthly sun,
And proclaim'd your vain ovation
For those mimic raptures you had won."

Think, my boy, over all these stanzas mean; and when next your friends would persuade you that your uncle is a sour old fool, ask them to explain to you exactly what it is they mean by Literature, by the triumphs, the delights and the rewards of a literary life. Perhaps they and he are after different foxes. I read the other day a review in which some clever young gentleman, who had got all the primers at his fingers' ends (but perhaps not much else), was making terrible havoc of a poor devil who had been trying to write a bit of history. "Mr. So-and-so," said he, "has evidently looked on such-and-such a thing with different eyes from ours." That is the humour of it. By all means be content with your mimic raptures, but do not take them "for the great triumph that stretches many a mile." You have read, no doubt, that the proprietor of a popular American newspaper has given it for his deliberate opinion that "a good editorial" is the highest achievement of the human intellect. Some of your friends must, I think, share this gentleman's views of Literature; and certainly it is one extremely comforting to the human intellect.

And now a word on the practical purpose of your own letter. By the way, though you are too courteous to complain, you insinuate that my own was not very practical. It abounded, you say, in hints, metaphors, suggestions, quotations;—in short, it was very entertaining (let me again present to you my best thanks), but it brought you to no definite conclusion. As Sir John Falstaff complained of Mistress Quickly, you knew not where to have me. Well, partly I could not be more explicit, partly it was not my cue to be. No doctor can prescribe for his patient without knowing all the symp-

toms of his malady, and under what treatment he may have already been. And had I counselled you directly against the profession of your choice, even had you thanked me, would you have taken my counsel? I am charmed to think that my nephew is not as others are, but I dare not believe him to stand among his fellows sole and particular. Then it was necessary to think of myself as well as of you. I had a suspicion you might show my letter about, or at least talk of it, and I had no mind to get myself into trouble. "Metaphors," said wilful Madge Ramsay, when reminded that they were no argument, "metaphors are such a pretty indirect way of telling one's mind when it differs from one's betters." Perhaps what you call explicit others might call offensive. Time was when I could give and take the swashing blow with any man; but I am old now, and prefer to leave the joys of battle to nimble joints and gayer hearts. And—I don't know—perhaps it is only another instance of the querulousness of age, but it seems to me as though the terms of the battle and the spirit of the combatants had changed since I fought in the lists. Do you know your Sterne well? There are some words of his Eugenius which often come into my mind now, when the journals echo (as they seem always to be echoing now) the calamities and quarrels of authors. We had our grievances when I was young, and we quarrelled often enough; but we were not, I think, quite so noisy over it, and we did not ask all the world to make a ring. When we were hit, we repaid the blow with interest if we could: if we could not, we e'en took it as smilingly as we might, and said no more about it. Nor did we carry the license of the law-courts (which seems to me, by the way, to be growing to a very disgraceful height) into our combats. When fault was found with our work, we did not ransack our critic's past to discredit his evidence or lay bare the secret springs of his malignity. We did not call all

the gods to witness that we had been stabbed in the back by a familiar friend, whose tavern-bill we might once have paid, because we had been convicted of a wrong date or an unverified quotation. Indeed, if you will take my advice, which on this point you shall have without any metaphor, you will never seek to justify yourself with a critic. If he has found fault with you fairly on matters of fact, be thankful to him for having taught you something, and do your best to profit by the lesson: you will probably only add to your blunders by trying to explain them. If he only traverse your opinions, remember that you have already shown yours, and that the public do not want them over again: if you have not shown them clearly, the blame is only yours. If he find fault with you unfairly, there is still more reason for leaving him alone: by answering him you only give him another chance to repeat the trick. In short, if he is wrong, through ignorance or design, your book stands to prove you right: if he is right, your book stands to prove you wrong. The world cares nothing for a critic quarrelling with an author, for it only regards him as showing cause for his existence; but when the position is reversed, the world begins to think there must be something really wrong with the author. I remember to have been greatly impressed by once hearing Lord Macaulay expatiate with all his usual vigour and felicity of illustration on the admirable wisdom of Bentley's saying: "Depend upon it, no author is ever written down but by himself." Read, then, these words of Eugenius: they may give you a hint or two for your own conduct, and in any case you will not, I think, grumble at the prescription: you will be advised to do many things more irksome than read a page of "Tristram Shandy" ere you lay down your pen.

Trust me, dear Yorick, this unwary pleasantry of thine will sooner or later bring thee into scrapes and difficulties, which no after

wit can extricate thee out of. In these sallies too oft I see it happens that a person laughed at considers himself in the light of a person injured, with all the rights of such a situation belonging to him; and when thou viewest him in that light too, and reckonest up his friends, his family, his kindred, and allies—and musterest up with them the many recruits which will list under him from a sense of common danger—'tis no extravagant arithmetic to say that for every ten jokes thou hast got a hundred enemies; and till thou hast gone on and raised a swarm of wasps about thine ears, and art half stung to death by them, thou wilt never be convinced it is so. I cannot suspect it in the man whom I esteem, that there is the least spur from spleen or malevolence of intent in these sallies: I believe and know them to be truly honest and sportive; but consider, my dear lad, that fools cannot distinguish this, and that knaves will not; and that thou knowest not what it is either to provoke the one, or to make merry with the other: whenever they associate for mutual defence, depend upon it they will carry on the war in such a manner against thee, my dear friend, as to make thee heartily sick of it, and of thy life too. Revenge from some baneful corner shall level a tale of dishonour at thee which no innocence of heart or integrity of conduct shall set right. The fortunes of thy house shall totter: thy character, which led the way to them, shall bleed on every side of it: thy faith questioned, thy works belied, thy wit forgotten, thy learning trampled on. To wind up the last scene of thy tragedy, Cruelty and Cowardice, twin ruffians hired and set on by Malice in the dark, shall strike together at all thy infirmities and mistakes: the best of us, my dear lad, lie open there—and trust me, trust me, Yorick, when to gratify a private appetite, it is once resolved upon that an innocent and helpless creature shall be sacrificed, 'tis an easy matter to pick up sticks enough from any thicket where it has strayed, to make a fire to offer it up with.

Now, however, that you have yourself been more explicit, perhaps I also may contrive to be so without running poor Yorick's risks. You ask a direct question: I cannot promise that my answer shall be as direct; but you shall freely have the benefit of such floating ideas as a tolerably long experience may have suggested. You tell me that you have been promised some literary employment, and you ask me if the conditions of Journalism, as set forth by Cardinal Newman, must inevitably apply to all work done for a daily paper. You are to be al-

lowed, you say, to try your hand at the critic's business, and you wish to know if it may not be possible to write criticisms which, though appearing in the shape of Journalism, shall yet have the qualities of Literature.

So you propose to join the noble army of Reviewers, for that is what your question comes to. You are going to taste that joy of firing at all the established wits which the old sage confessed had so mightily tickled him in his youth. Well, there is a pleasure in it, no doubt. It is a fine thing for a lad to feel that he can call the great Pomponius Ego a jackass for all the world to hear; and as the world has generally a great deal too much to do to listen to him, his pranks will probably do no great harm. But he must be careful to put away his childish toys when he becomes a man.

You will probably not be required to supply your critical tale every day, and consequently there can be no inevitable reason why it should not be as well done in a daily journal as in a weekly, a monthly, or a quarterly one. Sainte Beuve's best work, for instance, was done in a daily paper; and more years ago than you can remember there was some good criticism to be read in our own Times. Unless your business lie with the theatres (and most earnestly do I pray for your own sake that it may not) you should not want leisure to study your subject, to collect your thoughts, to exercise your reasoning faculties, and to supply the probable gaps in your knowledge. For you will find it useful to start with the belief that the author of a book knows more than you do. His book may be a bad one: even what knowledge he has he may have misused, and he may not have much; but it is, to say the least, probable that, however superior you may be to him in native intelligence, on this particular subject he will be better informed than you. This is not the most popular theory of

reviewing, nor is it the most convenient one: it is incomparably less trouble, besides giving far freer play for the exercise of your wit, to assume the author to be an ignoramus, and whenever you find something new to declare roundly that it is not true. But you will find the other plan, I think, best in the long run; and I speak with some experience for I have tried both.

Most probably you will be set to try your prentice hand on novels. I am not myself much of a novel-reader, and such fiction as I turn to for occasional refreshment is mostly of what is now called the old school. But from my small acquaintance with current fiction (which indeed seems to form by far the largest part of contemporary literature) I should doubt that you are likely to find this very agreeable employment. Certainly, if you have a turn for sarcasm, you will find plenty of scope for it here, especially in the pages of what are politely called our lady novelists, though there are indeed plenty of the men to match them; but it is mere butcher's work running your pen into these poor little butterflies, and so unnecessary: they die so soon, that they may well be left to flutter their short hour in peace. It needs no great wit to make fun of a stupid novel, and this order of wit is often rather cruelly employed. Criticism might, I think, keep its hand from this small game: even with fiction of good quality it has always been a doubtful point to me how far it is really concerned. It seems to me impossible to place a professed work of amusement, however good of its kind, on quite the same level as a work of high and serious thought or deep research. Far indeed am I from underrating the charm or the value of good novels: the best novels can indeed in their own way teach as well as amuse: they deserve their full share of acknowledgment and praise; but to weigh them in the nicest scales of criticism has always seemed to me a little out

of reason. In judging a novel, the personal sentiment is surely the decisive one. If a novel pleases me, it is a good novel to me : but it may not please you. It is permissible to have grave doubts on a man's place in the scale of intelligence who prefers "Richelieu" to "Macbeth," or "The Blessed Damozel" to "The Solitary Reaper," who thinks Carlyle a better historian than Gibbon, or Mill a better philosopher than Berkeley ; but I should hesitate to call him a fool who preferred "Romola" to "Old Mortality" or "Mansfield Park" to "Vanity Fair,"—though I should certainly not select him for the companion of my leisure hours. If you must review novels, you will perhaps do best (that is you will do least harm) to confine yourself to suggesting the purpose and substance of the story (not a very easy business, by the way, with most modern novels), and committing yourself to no positive judgment on its quality. Praise them, by all means, where you can : but deal gently where you cannot praise. A foolish novel brings its own punishment, and, when it is not vicious, may be safely left to that. Remember the words of the old critic : "I should think it a cruelty to crush an insect who had provoked me only by buzzing in my ear ; and would not willingly interrupt the dream of harmless stupidity, or destroy the jest which makes its author laugh."

If you must review novels—that is the rub. Could you confine your critical exercises only to those books which have attracted you, and on which you feel that you have really something to say, whether in praise or censure, well and good. The work then would at least be interesting to you, and might be useful both to yourself and to others. But this roving license you must not expect. The editor of a journal which devotes itself particularly to literature can, it is to be supposed, put his hand always on the man he wants. Each member of the staff has his own place for which he is (or is supposed to be, which indeed is

not always the same thing) specially fitted. The man who has a pretty taste in poetry is not required to review the last great discovery in science ; nor is the student of history set down to the latest batch of novels. But you must not think to begin your career by dictating your own terms to your editor. Poor Pilgric must take what he can get, and be thankful. He must show himself at least willing to write on all subjects, from poetry to dry-rot, as they used to say Lockhart was not only willing but able. In fact, he is practically, though undoubtedly the conditions of his slavery are less irksome, as much of a slave as the Cardinal's typical journalist : whatever is found for his hand to do, that must he do. When Johnson was engaged on his *Lives of the Poets*, Boswell, learning that the choice of subjects lay not with his illustrious friend but with the booksellers, asked him if he would undertake the life of any dunce whom they might select. "Yes, sir," was the sturdy answer, "and say he was a dunce." Even this liberty of conscience you must not make sure of. The sweet influences of the social Pleiades have to be allowed for, and most editors find it necessary to exercise as much discretion in their literature as in their politics. Indeed, when you reflect that nine critics out of every ten are also authors, or hope to be, you will see that in this battle of the books discretion is really, one may almost say, the only part of valour. If half one hears be true (and quite possibly it is not) the ramifications of the critical *genus* are curiously complicated ; and one of the few valid arguments I have ever heard advanced for this new practice of magazine-writers signing their articles came from a somewhat cynical old critic, who averred that it was so useful in saving you from the heinous crime of praising the wrong man.

Probably no editor would, or perhaps could afford to allow his most discreet reviewer complete license of opinion on

all subjects. No honest editor, and certainly no wise one, will command his contributors to say the thing that is not; but it may sometimes be extremely convenient to leave unsaid the thing that is. You will probably find your liberty of conscience extended in proportion to the quality of the journal for which you write. But in most cases I suspect the guiding principle of an editor's charity is a personal one. Toleration is enjoined, not for the poor and weak who really need it, but for those whom it would not be politic to offend. Even in those literary journals which every one at all interested in æsthetic things makes a point of reading, how often one sees the brazen offender let go free, or at the most called to order with more than Laputian gentleness, while the poor wretch who has no friend, and whose very insignificance might have saved him, suffers the extremest penalty of the law. An editor has bowels like the rest of us; hath not a Jew senses, affections, passions? No reasonable man would grudge him the exercise of his discretionary powers in the case of a friend; but he might also exercise them for the benefit of the common herd. I have sometimes heard the plea made that a journal, whose business it is to treat of literature, must treat of all literature, good and bad alike, and that consequently the bad must be treated according to its deserts equally with the good. Is this quite so? If one could be sure that good and bad would receive the same impartial treatment,—that the object on which the critic had his eye should in all cases be the book and not its writer,—then there might be something in this plea. But it must be obvious to every intelligent person who at all concerns himself with our current criticism that this is not the case, and perhaps, while human affairs and human natures are what they are, it never can be the case. Many excuses might be found for the presence of the personal estimate; and so long as that estimate is suffered only to stimulate the critic's good-

nature, perhaps it need not be very sternly excluded. "I am more and more convinced," said Goethe in his old age, "that, whenever one has to vent an opinion on the actions or on the writings of others, unless this be done from a certain one-sided enthusiasm, or from a loving interest in the person and the work, the result is hardly worth gathering up. Sympathy and enjoyment in what we see is in fact the only reality, and from such reality, reality as a natural product follows. All else is vanity." This was not the view of that very acute writer Mr. Bagehot, who declared that it was not the critic's business to be thankful. And this is true, too; but a young critic will, I think, do best, in this matter at any rate, to follow Goethe rather than Mr. Bagehot. But when this personal estimate is also allowed to influence the critic's less loving interest, then those excuses will not serve. If a new book is to be regarded merely as a piece of news, of which the public look for an account as they look for an account of a cabinet-minister's speech, a murder, or an aristocratic divorce-case, then criticism becomes mere reporting, and a reporter's business is, I apprehend, merely to give facts, and let others draw the inferences. A daily journal has no doubt in the case of a popular writer to take this view into account,—which it were as well for you to remember before you congratulate yourself upon having escaped altogether the bondage of Journalism by being only concerned with its literary side. But it need obviously do so only in the case of a popular writer; and in his case, criticism, if it cannot acquiesce in the general verdict, may be very well content to leave him to the care of that surest of all judges, Time.

You may, perhaps, argue that there are some books which, though weak and ineffective in themselves, deal with such important subjects that they cannot be neglected, cannot be allowed to spread their false views without remonstrance: there may be others

so impudent and pretentious as to deserve the fate of the false Rouge Sanglier; and that consequently to say that only good books, or books which at least may conscientiously be allowed their fair share of good qualities, should be the object of criticism, is to say an impossible thing. There may be such cases, though as a rule you will find, I think, that a book dealing with a really important subject is never wholly bad. A great subject will always in some measure act upon a writer, will inspire and stimulate him: it will move him at any rate to enthusiasm, and enthusiasm in a great cause is always refreshing. Fortunately for mankind a good writer has not always the same influence on a bad subject. Look, for instance, at that deplorable example of wasted talent, "*The Service of Man*," where you will find a clever writer falling into the most melancholy abysses of folly and unreason solely because he has selected an impossible subject. It is humiliating to think that a book so ill-considered, so illogical, and so transparently unfair in its method, should have needed any refutation in a society of reasoning beings. No intelligent boy who had read his New Testament but should be able to pick such a tissue of absurdities to pieces. But people nowadays read their New Testaments but little—the author of "*The Service of Man*" can, I am afraid, have read his not at all: there is a sort of idle foolish bodies about who are always glad to join in any cry against things of good report; and certain journals, out of regard, let us hope, for the writer's better work, spoke sometimes in praise of the book, and at most in admiring awe of what they were pleased to call its daring. It was therefore necessary that the truth should be told, and I am glad to see how clearly and temperately, though sternly, it has been told both in the *Quarterly* and in the *Edinburgh Review*.

But to return to yourself. There

is certainly something in your argument. I am very far from saying that it is never the business of criticism to expose errors and to reprove those who make them. It is the business of criticism to know the truth when it sees it and to proclaim it, to know falsehood and to proclaim it. But then comes in again this terrible question,—Will you be permitted to make proclamation? What I fear, my boy, is that you may be disappointed to find in how few cases you are permitted, and disgusted to find the motives which may influence the permission. I am assuming, you see, that your work will have to do mainly with current literature, whether on a weekly or daily journal. I am warning you against being too hopeful in this particular business, as I warned you generally before. Should you wish to make profession of your views upon Shakespeare, probably no editor will refuse you perfect license, at any rate upon personal grounds, though he might object for other and more commercial reasons. But when you come to touch the living men, the atmosphere changes; and you will probably find that it is for your own advantage that it should change. Contemporary production is for the most part worthless. Ah! I hear your friends beginning to storm; but let them consider. Let them consider for how many centuries human beings have been making books, and out of these books how many are worth reading. The number is indeed vast, but compared with the sum of production it is as the sum of the work done by our House of Commons compared with the words expended on it. I credit you with preferring to give pleasure rather than pain. If you are to speak the whole truth on every work of your contemporaries that comes into your hands, consider how much pleasure you are likely to give; and, not to lose sight of more interested motives (which it is never wise altogether to disregard) consider how many enemies you will make, how many friends you will lose.

It is only natural that an ardent, inexperienced young fellow like you, burning to level his pen against the crowd of rogues, idlers, and useless bodies generally who cumber the road up that temple-crowned steep we wot of, should at the outset chafe against the conditions he will find imposed on his exertions. But, believe me, as time goes on you will see that for your own comfort at any rate these conditions are not entirely useless. Criticism of one's contemporaries is at best a thankless task: it is surely unreasonable to grumble at those who try, no matter from what motive, to make it as thankful as possible.

Can there then, you will begin to ask, be nothing useful or profitable in your proposed employment? Let us hope it may prove profitable to you in a pecuniary sense, and consequently useful. But that the world will profit generally by your labours I should hesitate to say: to say that the subjects of your criticism will not profit by it I have no hesitation. Others may have cause to speak otherwise, but for my own part I have never met with an author who thought he had been praised sufficiently, or censured fairly. And in truth, I am much inclined to doubt whether the literature of any age has been much benefited by its critics. In our fathers' time the critic was a more important personage, and the two great quarterly reviews did, no doubt, exercise a sort of judicial authority. People generally had more reverence for authority then, for what, at any rate, they were agreed to regard as authority. And before those days criticism was not held in much account. Except in rare cases, in the case of Addison, for instance, and of Johnson, men who had made for themselves a position which gave effect to their words, the critic was commonly regarded as a feeble creature who revenged himself for his own inferiority by maliciously attacking his betters. The typical critic was not Addison, or Bentley, or Johnson, but Dennis, and

the herd of unfortunates who starved in Grub Street to make a meal for Pope's wit. It was with the beginning of this century that criticism became a power. When men like Coleridge and Lamb, De Quincey and Hazlitt, Jeffrey and Macaulay, Carlyle and Lockhart played the critic, the world could not but listen. Far be it from me to tell you that there are not as mighty men of valour now as then; but the force of the individual is rather lost in the crowd. In the immense mass of criticism which now hems us in on every side, there must inevitably be some which, let us not say is bad, but is not quite equal to the best, and inevitably diminishes the importance of the best. Consider again the vast increase in the number of readers. They cannot all be equally capable of distinguishing between the good and the less good; and the bulk of them will naturally call that good which chimes best with their personal tastes, or hits most accurately the popular whim. And though there may possibly be as good material now for criticism to work with as there was in the earlier time, there is so very much more material that it is not humanly possible for it all to be equally good.

"Most can raise the flower now,
For all have got the seed."

A flower does not really lose its beauty by becoming common, but man pays less attention to it.

Everything in the universe, some philosopher has said, goes by indirection; and criticism at any rate will generally go best that way. The direct value of a critic's verdict on a work of his own day is not, I suspect, great, however just it may be; nor do I believe that the clearest-headed man is capable of giving an absolutely passionless judgment on any contemporary work. The greater, the more original that work is, the less likelihood will there be of the passionless judgment. Some people look with suspicion on everything that is strange to them, that suggests new thoughts,

or proposes to upset old rules. Others again welcome with open arms everything new as inevitably true. Between these two orders of mind what chance has any contemporary work of being judged impartially? It is easy for us now to thunder against the blindness of those who rejected the new poetry of Keats and Shelley; but I often ask myself how many of those who praise the dead poets so finely would have praised them living; and still more often do I ask myself how many of our judgments on the men of our time will pass current with posterity. I doubt whether the critic's voice was ever so authoritative as perhaps he fancied, and as some authors, fearful or thankful as the case might be, would have had him fancy. That it has now grown considerably less so I, for my part, feel confident, for the reasons already given, and for others which I will not give. No doubt your friends could find a case or two against me. They could point possibly to the case of a bad author being brought to his proper level by a fearless and honest criticism: they could point certainly to the case of a bad author being raised to a spurious fame by criticism which might also be called fearless, but not honest. But remember my little story: a handful of pears and apples does not make an orchard. The great public cares nothing for criticism: it makes its own opinion and goes its own way. But a wise word is never lost: some day it will be found again, like the poet's careless song found long years after in the heart of a friend. Of the subjects on which Mr. Ruskin ostensibly writes, it becomes me to speak with the humbleness of ignorance, but many will, I think, bear me out in saying that his great value as a teacher lies outside the direct objects of his teaching. It lies not in his opinions on the pictures and the buildings that he has seen, but in the good and wise and fertilizing thoughts his seeing eye has suggested to him. The particular value of these lessons often escapes us at

the time: often we are unconscious even that we have learnt anything; but,

"Whene'r a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'r is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise."

Again, when Mr. Matthew Arnold tells us that in his opinion Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin are *lucida sidera*, twin stars that will shine for ever in the upper heaven, many, perhaps most of us, who value Mr. Arnold's opinions on literature, and are grateful to him for so much that he has done for us, have found it hard to quite follow him here. But when he writes thus of the quality of distinction—the quality which, he says, will secure for this gentle couple an immortality which has perhaps already put on mortality.

"Of this quality the world is impatient; it chafes against it, rails at it, insults it, hates it;—it ends by receiving its influence, and by undergoing its law. This quality at last inexorably corrects the world's blunders, and fixes the world's ideals. It procures that the popular poet shall not finally pass for a Pindar, nor the popular historian for a Tacitus, nor the popular preacher for a Bossuet."

Then we feel that a word has been spoken in season which we shall do well to remember.

But you will be growing impatient, like the world, and not at my distinction. I must really make an end. You ask if I can give you any directions or advice as to the means by which you may prepare yourself for the work you are to make trial of. If you have not been preparing yourself these years past, you had best make trial of something else. Of what use, think you, is the study of the best that has been thought and said in the world, if not to enable you to distinguish the good from the bad? "Every man," said Blake, "is a judge of painting who has not been connoisured out of his head." I can see your friends holding up their hands in horror at such a saying, and reminding you that Blake was mad. Yet

what a world of truth lies in his words. There are men of course congenitally incapable of judging rightly on any point, from politics up to poetry; but more judgments, you may depend upon it, go wrong from too much "connoisseuring" than from too little. How rarely, for instance, does a child judge wrongly within the sphere of its own little wits. It would be absurd to flatter you that your taste is now ripe; but if the tree has not already put forth flower, fruit there will never be. You have quick wits: you have been well taught: you have lived in a good atmosphere. If your instinct cannot help you to distinguish right from wrong I cannot. Trust your sense. One of the chief reasons why there is so much foolish criticism about, so much foolish work generally, is that it has become the fashion to regard common-sense as the mark of a barren and unimaginative mind. Partly this comes from the frantic striving after originality, which is the bane of our day: partly it is a reaction from the old school of criticism, the revolt of the purely æsthetic spirit against the dogmatic spirit. How, when you consider it, are you to show originality in criticism? The laws of right and wrong in art as in morals are fixed and eternal. The fashion of the hour may change: the pet of his own generation may be the pariah of the next; but the truth is not influenced by the number of little books written about it, or the prices paid in Mr. Christie's sale-room. Hold fast to common-sense, my lad, and let originality come when it will: it cannot be forced like a mushroom.

As for the form in which your work should be cast, I have often thought that the great Duke of Wellington's advice to a nervous friend on Parliamentary speaking were no bad advice to a young critic: "Say what you have to say, don't quote Latin, and sit down." Do not waste your time in hunting for new words, or balancing your sentences, but say what you must, or may, say in the best English you have, and the simplest. "There

are people," says Landor, "who think they write and speak finely merely because they have forgotten the language in which their fathers and mothers used to talk to them." Do not be one of these people; if for no other reason, for this,—there are so many of them about, that you will really go nearest to attaining that much-coveted originality by keeping aloof from them. For the rest, remember that it is above all things else the essential business of a critic to exhibit not himself but his author. The smart young man who has to turn off some half dozen new books for an evening paper may be excused for posturing: he has neither time nor space for anything more serious, and possibly he may be in the condition of the unfortunate who pleaded for his pranks that his editor would not take anything else from him. But I am crediting you not only with the good taste to be averse to these exhibitions, but with the good fortune to serve an editor who is also averse to them. Remember that an author, however poor a creature he may be, is a human being of like feelings with yourself. Find fault with his book if you must, but do not be insolent to him. Do not think that, because you are writing impersonally, you are privileged to behave in a way that would infallibly shut the door of any decent society against you. A bad book, if it be not a vicious book, is no crime. It is sometimes said that the manners of criticism have greatly improved. I am not inclined to entirely agree. There was a deal of sledge-hammer hitting in the old days, no doubt: Mr. Bludyer, when he had had his glass, was not particular where his bludgeon fell. But there was much less of school-boyish impertinence, of mere cavilling and misrepresentation. It was said of Croker that he would go a hundred miles through the snow of a December night to search a parish register to prove a man illegitimate or a woman a year older than she confessed herself to be. Sometimes I think that the spirit

of Croker is not wholly dead. The elder criticism may not have been so spiritual, or subtle, or—whatever the right epithet may be; but it was incomparably more manly, and on the whole I believe far more honest. There may be times when, as I have warned you, you will not be allowed to say all you mean: there may be times when you will not wish to say all you mean; but let there never be a time when you say what you do not mean. You may not prove yourself a good critic, but you must prove yourself an honest gentleman. And, in conclusion, take these two golden rules: never, if you can help it, review a friend's book: never, in any circumstances whatever, review the book of an enemy.

I fear, my boy, that you will find as little encouragement in this as in my former letter; and what your friends will say of it, if they see it, I shudder to think. Evidently they are all eager critics. But in truth my experience has not induced me to regard literary criticism, when practised under the conditions you will have, at least for some time, to put up with, as the most attractive branch of the Profession of Letters, or the most useful. There is a great deal too much of it which is neither criticism nor literature, as I understand those things, and which in the conditions of its production perhaps could not well be either. I do not blame those who produce it, but I regret the production. That there is much of better quality than this, I freely admit; but even of the best there seems to me too little which has not what Sainte-Beuve complained that he found among the generation of critics that was coming in as his own work was drawing to a close, *un peu de dureté*. Just these clever young critics possibly may be, but assuredly they are not amiable. Clever they certainly are: the general cleverness of modern criticism (modern writing, if you will) is undeniable. Perhaps if it were necessary for me to confine my objections

to a single charge, this word *cleverness* would serve me as well as any other. It is very clever; but its cleverness is of that sort which contributes less to the general good than to individual gratification. No: the habitual criticism of one's contemporaries can be, I will hope, an agreeable occupation to few men, and useful, I am sure, to none. It stirs many bad passions in others, and does not promote the best in ourselves: it blesses neither him who takes, nor him who gives. Useful, indeed, it may sometimes prove to the publishers and the booksellers, and I have far too much respect to these important classes of the community to allow no weight to this plea. But booksellers and publishers might perhaps be allowed to play Davy and write their own criticisms.

Once more let me remind you that I have been playing the Devil's Advocate throughout: it has been my business to prepare you for the worst, not to anticipate the best. You may have a different tale to tell to your nephew, and cordially I hope you may. Nay, I will even allow, if your friends insist, that you ought to have a different tale to tell. For, indeed, your old uncle sometimes fears lest he may have lagged too long on a stage where he has no proper part and before an audience with whom he is no longer in sympathy. What said the sage on the mountain-side?

"But he, whose youth fell on a different world
From that on which his exiled age is
thrown—

Whose mind was fed on other food, was
trained

By other rules than are in vogue to-day—
Whose habit of thought is fixed, who will
not change,

But, in a world he loves not, must subsist
In ceaseless opposition"—

Well, it is a far cry to Etna; but at least this superannuated philosopher can throw down "Apollo's scornful ensign"—a blunted goose-quill long past mending. Do not you pick it up.

WITH THE IMMORTALS.¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD.

CHAPTER XVII.

DIANA had wandered from the house alone one evening, and as she picked her way among the rocks she paused now and then to pluck the wild flowers that grew in every cranny and carpeted every little plot of grass among the boulders. She was thinking of all she had heard during the past days, and trying to reconcile the many varying opinions expressed by the strange party. She wished that she could go back into the closed centuries and see the lives of these dead men as they had been; and she sighed as she realised how far she was from understanding the real existence and conditions of existence of humanity in past ages.

"After all," she said aloud to herself, "we are not sure of ever understanding any history but that of our own particular lives. We dislike people who talk about themselves, and when they do not we are angry with them for not telling us what we want so much to know. Vanity of vanities!"

"And yet," said a quiet voice beside her, "next to ourselves, nothing interests us so much as other people."

Diana turned and recognised the beautiful features and the lofty figure of Lionardo.

"I thought I was alone!" she exclaimed in some surprise. "I am so glad it is you," she added quickly.

"Not more glad than I am," answered the old man courteously. "You were thinking aloud: I took the liberty of joining in the conversation of your thoughts. You were saying, or thinking, that people are interesting. Indeed there is very little else in the world which has any great interest for

those who live in it, or for those who have lived in it."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied Diana. "I have sometimes thought that it is bad for the mind to occupy it too much with people. Inanimate things seem safer: they do not change so fast. When we know anything about them we feel quite sure of what we know. It is not the same with people."

"People progress. Things either remain as they are or decay," said Lionardo, looking thoughtfully at the young girl. "It is clear that although in the last thousand years mankind has improved, Nature has tended to degenerate wherever she has not continued to be as she was. The sea knocks away the cliffs and slowly eats the land, the sun melts the glaciers, man makes holes in the mountains, the moon moves more rapidly round the earth, the earth revolves more slowly upon her axis. In rather less than twenty millions of years the moon will probably go round the earth once a day, and will remain apparently stationary in the heavens."

"That is a long time ahead," laughed Diana. "It will not come in my time."

"No. Your time, as you call it, is the time while you are alive. After that, time will belong to the next generation—not to you. The reason why time is so tremendously important to you is because the time of your life is all the time there is, so far as you are concerned. As you help to make it, so your time will appear to the view of those who follow you."

"Past time always seems more interesting than the present," said Diana, looking into the painter's deep eyes as though she were trying to conjure up

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the life that had once surrounded his. "I have often wished that I might have lived when you did."

"It was an age of individuals. This is the age of the millions."

"And what will the next age be?" asked the young girl.

"The age of collapse and of barbarian domination, I suppose," answered Lionardo.

"Of the three, yours, the age of individuals, is the most interesting."

"It seems so to you. People who live in luxurious leisure, using their intelligence in refined study, easily fancy that in an age of individuals talent played a greater part than it does now, and that they themselves would have been important figures in those times. But the people who lead the millions, in the age of the million, think their own century the most interesting. They think that in my time, for instance, they could have led everybody just as certainly with half the trouble, so that they get more credit now than they would have got then."

"Do you think they really could?" asked Diana. "Do you think that Prince Bismarck would have succeeded in unifying Italy under one rule, as Cæsar Borgia tried to do?"

"It is quite certain that Cæsar Borgia would have failed to unify Germany in the nineteenth century, in Prince Bismarck's place," answered the artist, with a smile. "Cæsar's mode of operating was different. He was Macchiavelli's ideal—cunning, cultivated, witty, unscrupulous. Bismarck is the incarnation of consistency animated by gunpowder. He has confounded the diplomatists of Europe for five and twenty years by telling them the truth. He goes upon the principle that honesty is the best policy for people who are able to hit very hard. Cæsar Borgia considered that lying was the appropriate dress of strength and that secret murder was the only expression of force. He did not see, when he had subdued a great part of northern Italy to his own rule, that

his position depended upon his father's life and influence. When his father, Alexander the Sixth, died, Cæsar naturally fell."

"I have heard it said that he might have maintained his conquests if he had not been ill from poison just at the critical moment," said Diana.

"I do not believe it. People are always finding excuses for fascinating men who fail after making a great deal of noise. After, all why did you bring up Cæsar Borgia as an example? He was handsome, clever, and a scoundrel, but he never came near greatness."

"He is a specimen of the times, that is all. I would like to have seen him—I would like to hear him talk with Bayard, for instance. It would be such a delightful contrast. Besides, he was a typical Italian."

"Ah, my dear young lady," replied the artist, "you are unfair to us. I cannot let you say that Cæsar Borgia was a type of our nation. We are better than that: on the faith of an artist, we are not all murderers and poisoners and traitors. There have been good men amongst us."

"Savonarola," suggested Diana.

"Savonarola—well—Savonarola," repeated the old man in doubtful tones, spreading out his hand with the palm downwards and alternately raising the thumb and little finger, as though balancing the good and evil genii of the Dominican monk.

"You seem to hesitate," remarked the young girl.

"Savonarola—he was not a bad man—no—but he was a detestable fellow. He fell a victim to a piece of his own very gratuitous political scheming."

"What an extraordinary view! I always heard that he was burnt by Alexander as a heretic."

"So he was," replied Lionardo thoughtfully.

"Well, then—I do not understand," said Diana.

"I will give you the history of Savonarola in three words—Enthu-

siasm, Fanaticism, Failure. He began to preach in 1489, under Pope Innocent the Eighth, and he inveighed against Lorenzo de Medici on the ground that he had usurped the sovereignty of Florence. He forgot that Lorenzo inherited the supremacy from his father Pietro, whose father, again, Cosmo de Medici, had already been practically the ruler of Florence. He forgot, too, that Lorenzo himself had narrowly escaped being murdered with his brother by the agents of Sixtus the Fourth, the Pazzi, the so-called friends of liberty. Savonarola took upon himself to refuse absolution to Lorenzo when on his death-bed, on the sole ground that the latter would not renounce and abdicate the power he had inherited. That was in 1492. In 1494 Savonarola excited the Florentines against Pietro, Lorenzo's son, when he returned from his attempt to treat with Charles the Eighth of France, and succeeded in driving him out, thus thrusting his fellow citizens into the arms of the French King, who forthwith entered Florence as a foreign conqueror; and the Florentines had great difficulty in getting rid of him. From that time Savonarola continued to preach an alliance with Charles the Eighth, which practically meant a submission to him. Meanwhile, Alexander the Sixth, Rodrigo Borgia, scandalized the world by his conduct, and Savonarola openly denounced the Pope. He forgot, however, that Alexander the Sixth, with all his vices, had been one of the founders of the league which had driven the French out of Italy. Alexander resented Savonarola's propaganda of the French alliance, and, seeking occasion against him, declared the monk a heretic for assuming to be endowed with supernatural gifts and for his attacks on the government of the church. Savonarola refused the ordeal by fire himself, and his friend and fellow monk, Domenico Buonvicino, refused it at the last moment, when the pile was erected. Every one declared Savonarola an impostor, and he was delivered over to the Pope. Under

torture he weakly confessed all manner of misdeeds which he had not committed, and he, with his two friends, Buonvicino and Maraffi were strangled, and their bodies were burnt in the Piazza della Signoria. That is the history of Girolamo Savonarola. I do not see that there is material for making a martyr of him since his death: there certainly was not the stuff of a hero in him when he was alive."

"That is a very prejudiced account of him," remarked Diana.

"I could say far worse things of him. He was an iconoclast, a destroyer of everything that was beautiful, a Vandal! If he had lived to carry out his schemes he would have left not one work of art in Florence. He detested Lorenzo for his love of the antique, and would have got rid of all the Medici for ever, if he could. Pray, what would Florence have been without the Medici?"

"Nevertheless," objected Diana, who would not relinquish her point, "people have been found to defend him as a hero and a martyr even in our day."

"As they defend Giordano Bruno," retorted the artist. "But Sismondi, the most important of modern Italian historians and profoundly prejudiced against the popes, did not defend him in his actions, though he admired him for his original qualities. Sismondi accuses him of taking his own impulses for prophetic revelations, by which he directed the politics of his disciples, and states without comment the fact that the monk pushed the Florentines into an alliance with Charles the Eighth, the enemy of Italian liberty. Sismondi, who hated the popes and especially detested Alexander the Sixth, could not refrain from stating that Savonarola was burnt alive, contrary to the evidence of all the best authorities; but he does not conceal the fact that Savonarola pretended, like Mahomet, to be receiving constant and direct revelations from God. Machiavelli speaks of him

as veering from point to point, to paint and colour his fraud and cunning. That is natural enough, since Machiavelli was deeply attached to Lorenzo de Medici. Your English historian Roscoe, who may be supposed to represent the judgment of Protestants upon the Dominican monk, speaks of him with unmeasured scorn. He says that Savonarola entitled himself to the homage of the people of Florence by foretelling their destruction, and that he contributed essentially to the accomplishment of his own predictions; and he further adds that he entertained the most vindictive animosity against his patron, Lorenzo de Medici. I do not see what other evidence you can want. The fact that he was enthusiastic when he began his career does not excuse him for having been vindictive at a later period, nor for having acted the impostor in pretending to receive Divine revelations of which the object was the ruin of Florence. Believe me, my dear young lady, all this sympathy for Girolamo Savonarola is sentimental. It is of a piece with the modern fashion of extolling the virtues of Lucrezia Borgia, and of making out that Nero was a gentle, sensitive and misunderstood artist of genius. I can defend Alexander the Sixth and Caesar Borgia as eloquently as you can defend Savonarola or Giordano Bruno, upon different grounds."

"Upon what grounds?" asked Diana. "I do not see how you can compare two profligate tyrants with two men who were certainly moral in their private lives, if they were nothing else."

"Moral!" exclaimed Lionardo. "Savonarola — yes — he was moral enough: he meant to be a good man. But Giordano Bruno! One portion of his writings is not fit for man or beast, much less for woman!"¹ When he

was not spiteful he was filthy, and when he was neither he was blasphemous, though he was frequently all three together."

"Of course I have never read his works," answered Diana quietly; "but I believe he was something of a philosopher, not to say a scientist."

"I will do him the credit to say that he defended the system of Copernicus," assented the artist with a smile; "and he quarrelled with all known and unknown philosophies. But the system of Copernicus does not in itself constitute a morality, and it was on the ground of his morality that you proposed to defend him. I did not say he was a fool. I said he was a bad man. He was not so bad as Cæsar Borgia, but he was very far from being so important a personage."

"The greatness of the Borgias was not of the kind to be envied. I cannot see why you cling to them."

"You yourself said you would like to see Cæsar," answered Lionardo. "Believe me, if you could see half-a-dozen of those men together and talk with them you would not think our age so delightful as it looks through the stained glass of three centuries. We artists enjoyed our lives more than other men, I suppose, because the reigning princes always had need of us, whoever they chanced to be. In my day I served the Florentine Republic, Ludovico Sforza of Milan, Cæsar Borgia, Louis the Twelfth of France, Leo the Tenth, and Francis the First. I painted for Florence, I made canals for Ludovico Moro, I fortified towns for the Duke Valentino,² I made more canals for Louis, and I painted pictures for the rest. No one ever molested me, and I had a very happy life. But look at the governments I served. Florence was

² Many critics found fault with Mr. W. W. Astor for calling Cæsar Borgia by this name. Machiavelli in the last paragraph of the third chapter of "The Prince," says: "I had an interview about this at Nantes with the Card. d'Amboise when Valentino, as the son of Pope Alexander was commonly called, occupied Romagna."

¹ It is to be presumed that Giordano Bruno's English defenders have either never seen his complete works, or have not understood the low Neapolitan dialect in which he often wrote.

the battle ground of the Medici and the popes, Ludovico Sforza died in a dungeon, Caesar Borgia was killed in a skirmish after having been exiled for many years, and even Leo the Tenth is now generally believed to have been poisoned. Their lives were not easy and their deaths were less so, but we artists were rarely molested. We enjoyed a special immunity because we were always wanted."

"Artists are not often molested in our day, and as far as numbers go they have the better of you," replied Diana. "But apart from that, there was an individuality in your age which we do not understand. Single characters stand out, like Caesar Borgia, Ludovico Sforza, or any of those men—but we form no distinct idea of their surroundings. I wonder why that is so. When I think of Julius Caesar, I think of him in connexion with the other men of his time, as coming soon after Marius and Sulla, as the rival of Pompey, as the uncle of Octavius—"

"The Roman Caesar was a greater man than our personages of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. You know more about him."

"That is not the reason. I sometimes think I would rather know more about your times than about ancient history. I have a much clearer idea of the surroundings of Alcibiades than of the daily life of Caesar Borgia."

"I think," answered Lionardo, "that the complication of small events in our day was too great to be remembered distinctly. There were too many romantic characters, involved in desperately romantic circumstances, producing on the whole very little effect upon the world. One remembers the individual without connecting him with the event. A fictitious interest is often attached to romantic personages which does not seem justified by their deeds. Hence it is not easy to compose a history of one of them which shall not disappoint the reader."

"You artists, at least, are known by what you accomplished," said

Diana, looking at the old man's expressive face.

"And perhaps some of those princes deserve only to be remembered for having paid the price of our work," returned the painter. "We were often obliged to sing our own praises in order to obtain orders from them. I remember writing a letter to Ludovico which I should be ashamed to write in your times, but it was necessary then. I professed myself able to build public and private edifices as well as any one alive, to construct canals against any known engineer, to produce statues of bronze or marble or clay, and to paint, all as well as any living artist. It is true that Michelangelo was a boy at the time, Titian was a baby then, and Raphael and Andrea del Sarto were both born in the year I wrote the letter. Nevertheless, I have often thought with wonder of my own assumption in enumerating my talents. On the other hand, if I had shown any modesty or diffidence I should never have attracted Ludovico's attention. That was the way in which our individuality asserted itself. Men knew that their success depended on their ability to force themselves upon the attention of the great, unless they were great by birth, in which case they were obliged to rule as much by inspiring terror as by exhibiting clemency. The artist of course knew that if he failed to fulfil his promises, it was in the prince's power to ruin him, and the prince himself, having power to destroy the artist, readily put faith in the professions of a man who showed himself ready to run so great a risk. The result of all this was the contrast of individualities which has surprised posterity. Where great forces are called into play, the will and intelligence of the leader are easily confounded with the executive power he directs, owing to the magnitude of the result. To take an instance from more recent times, such as the failure of Bonaparte's expedition to Russia: I fancy that you think quite as much of Marshal Ney and of the

Grande Armée, as of the Emperor himself, when you recall your general memories of the campaign. Most people do. But when you think of Cesar Borgia and his attempt to conquer the north of Italy, you think of the man alone, and your mind probably provides you with no picture of his soldiers, his lieutenants or his counsellors. He is, to you, a detached monster of wickedness, little better than Eccelino Romano, the tyrant of the Trevisan March, though a little more clear to the historical vision. Their atrocious deeds are not rendered insignificant by enormous military operations, decisive victories or defeats, entailing the ruin of an empire. The background is but a panorama of petty warfare in the darkest episodes of which the princes themselves were the chief actors. Their individuality stands out like a black figure in the foreground of a grey picture. To understand those men thoroughly you must study their surroundings, you must fill in the middle distance and the background until you feel that the whole composition is harmonious. You must learn how the various classes of men lived in those days, and especially what the various classes thought of the princes who governed them. The light of history falls unequally on the armies of the past, as they stand drawn up in their dead ranks. The figures that chance to be illuminated look much as they did in life, but the effect they produce is exaggerated by the darkness which surrounds them."

"For the sake of posterity," said Diana, "painters should paint nothing but scenes from their own times. It might be less interesting to themselves, but it would be vastly more valuable to the people who live after them. Each succeeding generation paints subjects from the preceding times. Even in our day it is fashionable to paint pictures of persons in the dress of the beginning of the century. For a long time, anything later than shorts and silk stockings was considered impossible on canvas. Artists have now

attacked the *incroyable* period. It is reserved for the genre painters of the next century to represent men in trousers and evening coats and women in costumes invented by Doucet or Redfern. I believe there are a few original geniuses who have tried even that. After all, why is it not better to preserve accurately for posterity what we can see, than to revive more or less inaccurately that which belonged to the past? Why should what we meet everyday in real life look ridiculous in a gilt frame, unless it chances to be in the portrait of some living person? Why cannot history be painted as well as written? Raphael and Pinturicchio have left a series of frescoes in the library of the Cathedral of Siena, which give one a complete idea of the life of Pius the Second. Why could they not have done the same for Alexander the Sixth, who lived in their own time? I would have artists perpetuate the events of their day, and I would have governments bear the expense of such pictures as being valuable historical documents."

"It would be good for history and bad for art," answered Lionardo thoughtfully. "A series of coloured photographs would answer the purpose without degrading art. But I doubt whether anything of the kind, if you had it, would recall our age to you as it was. A gallery of portraits of people assembled upon an important occasion, and dressed in their best clothes, would not suffice to create in your mind an impression of the way in which those people lived. Nor is it the object of art to perpetuate common and often repulsive details. Art without a little inspiration can be nothing but a laborious substitute for photography; whereas it should be the object of photography to perform at a cheap rate the drudgery which true art must always despise, or to reproduce at an insignificant price the works of good artists for the delectation of those persons who are unable to see the originals. Painters must

paint portraits of all sorts of people, since the appreciation of beauty is greatest where there exists at the same time the most profound knowledge of the commonplace. Beauty being exceptional, the understanding of it requires a detailed acquaintance with what is not beautiful, since it is by constantly eliminating the imperfect that the highest perfection is attained. Much that is thought to be beautiful really borders upon the unnatural, and it needs both study and experience to decide at what point the exaggeration of one or more good features begins to produce the strange feeling of dissatisfaction which arises from the discord of proportion which is nicknamed the grotesque. Therefore I say that painters must paint portraits of all kinds of people in order to be able to imagine and paint faces of ideal beauty."

"I fancy it is generally believed that the way to create beautiful works is to study only the beautiful," said Diana. "But your theory seems true."

"It is because men have been confined so long by the schools to the study of the beautiful, that they have suddenly thrown themselves into the opposite extreme. From having been taught to believe that only one class of subjects ought to be represented, they have fallen into the error of supposing that nothing is so hideous as to be unworthy of the artist's pencil."

"You used to paint very ugly things yourself," remarked Diana.

"For study," answered the artist. "I was fond of physiognomy, as every painter should be. I loved to study the origin of expression in the face. When a beautiful woman laughs lightly the same muscles are in motion which produce a horrid grin in the face of a drunken boor. As far as the lines go, supreme beauty and repulsive ugliness are only a quarter of an inch apart."

"Nothing quite symmetrical is entirely displeasing to the eye," said the young girl. "The most horrible

masks and gargoyle water-spouts are used as architectural ornaments, and are not disagreeable, so long as their features have some symmetry."

"Symmetry is a vertical notion," replied Leonardo, "and corresponds to the horizontal motion we call proportion."

"I do not understand," said Diana.

"Our idea of symmetry only extends to the right hand and the left hand of a central vertical line," answered the artist. "It does not extend above or below a horizontal line. In the latter direction we have only a desire for proportion. A church door, for instance, having two pillars on the one side and three on the other would shock us by its lack of symmetry; but a temple in two stories may have seven pillars below and six or five above—we do not demand symmetry in that direction, though we require proportion. A building broader above than below would strike us as an architectural monstrosity on account of the evident lack of stability in the equilibrium. But a pyramid is pleasing to the eye. A pyramid in any other position than standing on its base would be offensive to our instincts. It is the same with the human face and the human body. The symmetry to right and left is indispensable: if you preserve it you may invent any monster to be carved in wood, stone, or metal. The result may be terrible, grotesque, or beautiful; it will never produce the sensation evoked by incongruity, it will never be half so frightful as the effigy of a monster with one eye on one side and a smooth surface in its place on the other. You may obliterate both the eyes without producing the startling effects caused by effacing only one of them. The absence of nose or mouth in a drawing only makes the face look unfinished, the lack of an eye inspires horror. If you preserve symmetry, you may paint grinning peasants to any extent of variety, and the painting of them will be useful as a study. Even commonplace heads are good to paint, as I said before,

because you learn to eliminate gradually all that is not beautiful."

"Do you mean that artists ought to begin by studying the ugly?" inquired Diana.

"They should not begin by drawing only academical noses and architectural eyebrows, as they generally do. They ought to draw alternately beautiful and ugly faces, and above all they should draw from the first faces having a great variety of expression. Overstudy of the academic often produces distaste for the beautiful."

"As a child ends by hating the collects and gospels which he has been forced to learn by heart on Sunday," suggested the young girl. "I suppose that the same truth extends to other things. People who make a hard and fast rule for themselves are sometimes more inclined to go suddenly to an opposite extreme than people who go along without any particular principle. When Karl Sand had murdered Kotzebue, he fell on his knees before the crowd in the street outside the house and solemnly thanked God for his victory, while stabbing himself in the breast to escape justice. He lived long enough to be beheaded after all. What an outrageous set of contradictions! And yet he was theoretically no more illogical than the painter who paints anatomical monstrosities because he is sick of the staid style of the academy."

"Savonarola came very near being an instance of the same thing," answered the old artist. "As for my good friend King Francis, when he was tired of imitating Bayard, he imitated Caesar Borgia. He was nearly as successful with the one as with the other."

"Francis the First was one of the most inconsistent men who ever lived. I do not like him."

"And yet he meant to be a good man. He fancied himself always what he really was on very rare occasions. But he was inconsistent, except in his desire to found an absolute monarchy."

"I suppose it is something to a king's credit if he is consistent in one thing," said Diana. "One must not expect too much."

"I have sometimes thought that with all their faults the Italians of our age were more consistent than the foreign princes who attacked them," replied Lionardo. "The most apparently inconsistent of all was Gian Galeazzo Visconti, who lived before I did, but of whom people still talked when I was alive. And yet his inconsistency was only apparent, it was not real. He so concealed his own intentions that people were not able to reconcile together the results he produced. But it was clear in the end that every action of his life had tended to his own aggrandisement. When he locked himself up in his castle, and pretended that he was afraid of being assassinated if he stirred abroad, no one suspected that it was a mere comedy calculated to increase the confidence of his brother Barnabo, whom he murdered at their next meeting. There was certainly an evil consistency at the bottom of his most contradictory actions. But Francis was really inconsistent. He was theatrical. He was easily moved to produce striking effects, and very hard to move to anything which did not amuse him. He won the battle of Marignano against the Swiss by his own heroic personal courage, and he lost the battle of Pavja by an unlucky display of vanity—by taking the advice of Bonnivet against that of every one else, and giving battle from a disadvantageous position. He loved glory when it was to be had by physical courage: he did not care for it when its price was the sacrifice of his own inclinations. He broke a very solemn promise made to the Emperor when he was a prisoner, and he broke it for his own advantage. Then, when he had the Emperor in his hands, he treated him with the utmost magnanimity, entertained him splendidly, and sent him on his way in peace."

"That was to his credit, at all events," said Diana. "A smaller man

would perhaps have kept his promise in the first instance, but would have locked up Charles in the Bastille when he had a chance."

"And what would a modern sovereign do in the same circumstances?" asked the painter.

"I suppose that if he were defeated as Francis was at Pavia, his people would dethrone him and make a revolution. That was what happened to Napoleon the Third."

"Would the same thing happen if a king of England were caught and made prisoner by his enemies in these times?"

"I do not know," answered Diana. "The English would fight for their king, I imagine, and perhaps they would dethrone him after they had got him back."

"That sounds inconsistent."

"No; they would be too patriotic to allow their king to remain a prisoner, that would touch their national pride. But as far as their relations with their sovereign were concerned, they would be independent enough to dethrone him if they were not satisfied with his kingship. Patriotism is not loyalty."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE they were talking the sun went down, and all the sky grew soft and purple above them.

"Another day is gone," said Diana almost sadly. "Let us go home. You will come with me, will you not?"

"I will come with you a part of the way," answered the artist. "But I will come again this evening with the others of our friends. Why are you sad?"

"The sunset is like the autumn," sighed the young girl. "The saddest time of the day, and the saddest time of all the year. It must be like dying. The light will go out some day, and leave us in a world we do not know, through which we cannot find our way."

"Were there no other spring, nor any other rising of the sun, death would be dreadful indeed. But you are young to think of such things."

"Yes," answered Diana, smiling a little. "Besides, if we were logical we should look at things differently. We ought to consider the condemned criminal, who is told that he is to die on a certain day of the month at a certain hour as the happiest of mortals. He, at least, knows exactly how long he has to live, whereas I may go on for sixty years, or die to-night. What a lottery!"

"Ah, my dear lady, we must not be discontented with the beginning. There is peace yet to come. All life is but a step towards peace. Sometimes when men live to be very old, peace begins for them before they have crossed the threshold. To others it comes later, but to all good men and women it comes at last."

"How strange those moralities sound—when you utter them! What are you? I see you and talk with you. I have touched your hand and heard your voice. I know you as I know the others—what are you?"

"We do not know what we are," answered the venerable artist very gravely. "We know only that we are still ourselves, and shall be for ever. And somewhere, too, are all the million, million selves that have played parts in this little corner of the universe since the beginning. That is all we know. Good-bye—we shall meet again this evening."

"Good-bye," said Diana, taking his cold hand fearlessly in hers, and gazing for a few seconds into his deep, liquid eyes.

Lionardo left her, and she hastened homeward through the deepening twilight. What he had said had produced a profound impression upon her, the stronger for its extreme simplicity. She wondered whether it were true, and whether, even when her last sun had set and her last breath had trembled upon the air of a mortal world, she should still not know the great

secret. In youth death often seems very near because we fear it: in old age it is nearer still, because men desire peace when they are weary, and have little joy of life when the strength is gone from them.

That evening at dinner there was less conversation than usual. The strange life which the party at the *Castello del Gaudio* had been leading for some time was beginning to produce its inevitable effect. They all grew silent and were often pre-occupied with one common thought, wondering constantly what was to happen next. Every one wore a look in which a question was expressed and an uncertainty, for they had been trespassing in dreamland or shadowland, whichever be the name given to that misty country by the shades that dwell there.

"Why should it not last for ever?" exclaimed Diana suddenly.

"Oh, I should go mad if it did!" said Lady Brenda. "Not but that it has been most delightful, of course. But it is so weird, and altogether—I cannot explain it at all."

"No," answered Augustus. "I believe you cannot, nor I either, nor any of us. But I am not sure that I would like it to go on for ever. This sort of life makes one unfit for anything but loafing. Slang? Yes, you must forgive me. Only dead men are quite above slang."

"I think," said Gwendolen, "that people will find us dreadfully changed when we go home. But I would not give up all we have had here for anything in the world."

No one spoke again for some minutes, for Gwendolen had expressed what was passing in the minds of the others. They would not willingly have forfeited such memories.

"It may change our way of thinking," said Augustus, at last. "But I am not sure that we should any of us care to think differently about such things."

"We should not be ourselves if we did," answered Gwendolen. "I know

we should not be happier. 'Ourselves' means what we think we are."

"Together with what other people think of us," added Diana.

"When I say 'myself,' I mean what I am," put in Lady Brenda. "What other people think about me does not change me."

"I do not know," said Augustus. "But even if it does not, do you know what you are?"

"I suppose I could describe myself, if I tried—and if nobody were there to hear the description," answered his mother-in-law.

"That would only be telling what you think of yourself. You might be mistaken. It is commonly said that we should know the truth if we could see ourselves as others see us."

"I do not believe that is true. Other people will generally over-estimate or under-value us. No one can know what I am but I myself."

"But even you yourself do not quite know," objected Diana.

"Then nobody knows. What difference does it make?" retorted Lady Brenda, laughing. "And if nobody knows how can any one know that I am changed after talking to a dozen or so of intelligent ghosts for a month, more or less?"

"It has been more like a dream than a reality," said Diana with a little sigh. "Sometimes dreams do affect our lives for a little while. I think it is strange that we should feel as we do about these spirits, or manifestations, or whatever they are. We all feel their unreality when they are gone, and yet they are so much like living people that they do not startle us when they appear."

"It is certainly very odd," Gwendolen remarked. "And I wonder how they all chance to be together. Do you remember our first dinner here? We each named some one whom we would like to see, and most of them have come. Perhaps it is only a creation of our brains."

"I was going to propose a moonlight sail this evening," said Augustus.

"What do you all think of it? We can sail round the Galli, or the Isles of the Sirens—whichever they are—and if all these ghosts have been the creation of our brains, why then?"

"We might see the Sirens themselves!" exclaimed Gwendolen.

"I wish we could hear them," answered Diana.

"If we do—really, we shall have to send for keepers and turn your castle into a lunatic asylum!" said Lady Brenda.

"I have had everything got ready for this evening," replied Augustus. "We have only to go on board. The sea is like glass, and this queer breeze from the rocks will carry us as far as we like to go—all night if we like. The natives call it the *puizza*. The other night a boat was nearly capsize by it, though the water was like oil."

The party left the room and soon afterwards reassembled on the terrace, whence a flight of steps led to the descent to the beach. They all stood together for a moment and looked out at the quiet sea. The moon was not yet full, but the light was strong and clear, already high and casting few shadows.

As they went down to the shore, walking carefully over the rough path, they began to feel the cool air that pours over the edge of the land in a continuous stream from sunset to sunrise, rushing over the water, swiftly at first and then more slowly, till it floats out silently into the night, tempering the heated surface of the calm southern sea with a restful freshness. The yacht lay less than fifty yards from the beach, mainsail and topsail hoisted, only waiting for her passengers to slip her moorings from the buoy and glide away through the silent moonlight. She was a large and beautiful cutter, winner of many a race, and famous for her doings on rougher seas than the Gulf of Salerno or the Bay of Naples. A neat gig, manned by four men, was waiting by a projecting rock that served as a

landing, and in a few minutes the whole party was on board. Augustus took the helm himself, and the three ladies established themselves upon chairs near him. The men went forward, and in a few minutes the yacht was moving swiftly along westward towards the Campanella and Capri.

Presently there were other forms upon the white deck. One by one, the strange companions who had become so familiar to the inhabitants of the castle became visible, standing and sitting in various attitudes, all grouped about the four living people at the stern of the yacht.

"This is the river Styx, and I am Charon!" exclaimed Augustus. "Whither shall I ferry you? Are the Isles of the Blessed near?"

Then Augustus and his three companions heard a sound that was not the rushing of the night wind through the rigging, nor the swirl of the dark water under the raking stern. It was a deep, mysterious breath, more felt than heard, full of human sadness, but without the reality a sigh takes from human suffering. It came from the breasts of those shadowy beings who had learned the great secret, but could not impart it to the living with whom they lingered. There was an infinite pathos in the expression of it that deeply moved those who heard it. It floated away into the night and was lost in the breeze, like a last farewell that echoes and is gone, while the responsive heartstrings still quiver and repeat the bitter music roused by that dear voice.

"The Isles of the Blessed!" said Heine at last. "No, they are not near. Your ship cannot sail to them."

"I wish we could all sail there together," said Diana. "It would be so simple."

"Who knows?" returned the poet, who was standing beside her. "Only what we know is simple."

"And we know nothing," answered the young girl sadly. "I do not know certainly that you are not one

of my dreams. When I touch your hand and find it cold, I may be asleep on the terrace at the castle, and my fingers may have fallen upon the marble balustrade, or against a glass of cold water."

"Of course. And for all I know I may be alive still, dreaming that I am dead."

"That is impossible," replied Diana quickly, "for I have read of your death."

"You may have read it in your dream, or I may be dreaming that you have dreamt it. But it has been a very long dream!"

"Sir," said Doctor Johnson, "I will not permit you to consider me a mere morsel of your dreams. The unconscious ratiocination of your brain cannot have the power to call into existence the personality, and the sequences of memory and thought, by which I know myself to be an individual being. If it could, sir, I should talk like you."

"But I know something of your works and I could very well imagine how you would talk. Nothing proves to me that you are not my dream. Nothing can prove to our living friends here that we are not their dreams, especially if we should chance to send them to sleep, so that on waking they should find us gone."

"Ay, the waking, sir, the waking!" repeated Johnson, shaking his head violently from side to side; and again that melancholy sigh trembled on the air, and then died away in the sound of the breeze.

"Why are you all so sad to-night?" asked Lady Brenda, who hated anything approaching to melancholy.

"Indeed, madam, we have reason for sadness," answered Francis, at last. "When you speak of such things, I wish I were Bayard. Unfortunately—" he stopped short.

"You never could have been," said the lady with a smile. "Perhaps you would not if you could, or it may be that you could not if you had had the will."

"I do not know why your Majesty should wish to exchange with me." It was Bayard who spoke.

"A man would sacrifice much to leave behind him such a name as yours," said Augustus: "the name of a man without fear and without reproach."

"Reproach had a different meaning in my time," replied the Knight calmly. "I was no saint. I should perhaps scarcely pass muster in your modern society. I went through life with one idea, or motto."

"What was that?" asked Gwendolen quickly.

"Always do what you are afraid of doing—it is a good motto, I think."

"Yes, provided it is not a wrong thing."

"The thing one fears to do is seldom bad," answered Bayard. "Fear is the devil's barrier between man and good deeds."

"What a part in your life of to-day is played by those ideas of right and wrong!" exclaimed Cæsar, suddenly joining in the conversation. "When I lived the question was, whether an act was legal or illegal. No man's conscience asked more than that."

"What did Horace mean, then, by his *integer vita*?" asked Augustus.

"An honest man," replied Cæsar. "That is, a man who lived according to the laws. He adds *scelerisque purus*, innocent of crime. The conjunction of epithets explains everything. If one of your contemporaries spoke of you as an honest man, he would hardly think it necessary to add that you were innocent of crime. The one term is now supposed to contain the other."

"But you had also the religious idea. *Fas* and *nefas* expressed it, as an equivalent to our right and wrong."

"Our religion, or our fifty religions, had very little hold upon anybody in the higher classes. *Fas* came to mean, generally, what you would call unwritten law; that is, it meant the verdict of educated public opinion, and included every kind of superstition

as well as every idea of social propriety. But what does it matter how we thought? Thoughts may go on and change, but the end of life is the end of action, and inaction is torment."

The calm intonations of his voice trembled a little as he spoke the last words, and he turned his face away from the moonlight.

"And must inaction last for ever?" asked Gwendolen, softly.

"For ever, perhaps. Perhaps only until to-morrow's dawn. Who knows? Not we, who walk between three worlds—shadows, and less than shadows, memories, and yet more than memories. Nor can you know, you who live, and can still find something to do that has not yet been done."

"But where are the rest?" asked Diana after a pause. "Where are the shadows of old time, and the shadows of yesterday? Where is Achilles? Where are the Sirens? Where is the king who died last year, the beggar who died last night?"

"With yesterday, as we are—you only are with to-day, and the world may never see to-morrow."

"But that yesterday—what is it? Where is it?"

"It is not. It has no reality, though it was once real. It is a memory with those who knew it. For those who knew it not, it is nothing, no more than the shadow of a cloud that lingered a moment on the hill-side to-day."

"As for the Sirens, their music is as sweet as ever," said Chopin, gazing through the dreamy moonlight at the islets, now far astern of the yacht but still clearly visible.

"If we could only hear them!" sighed Gwendolen. Then she laughed at the idea.

"Why not? It is just such a night as they love."

"If anything could make the night more beautiful it would be music," said Lady Brenda. "But I am afraid you are quite, quite mad, Gwendolen. Of course the Sirens never really existed."

"Then why did people write so much about them?"

"Madam," said Doctor Johnson, "that which is beautiful has a permanent existence, but those things which are in contradiction to the nature of beauty are destined to perish and decay. Those who seek to resuscitate, by the active exertion of their imaginations, the noble and elevating thoughts of forgotten ages, will certainly obtain success in a measure proportional to their ability and industry; but such persons as lack the originality necessary to conceive great works, the application which is indispensable for their execution, and the faith in beauty, through which alone the poetic inspiration can be conveyed, are by nature unable either to revivify the glories of the past, or to contribute anything new to that assemblage of eminently excellent things with which mankind are already acquainted."

"But where there is the faith alone, there is always the capacity for enjoying the beautiful," suggested Gwendolen.

"Ah, my dear lady, you have it there!" answered the Doctor. "The faith is the thing."

"Then we might hear the Sirens after all. If they were bad and cruel, their songs were divine. We might hear the song, even if we could not see the women."

"I will go about when we are abreast of the cape, my dear," said Augustus. "This breeze will end there, and in coming back we will run under the islands."

"Oh, do!" cried the two younger ladies in a breath.

"It would be worth while to hear the Sirens and live to tell of it," said Heine. "How often I longed to listen to the Nixies and Watersprites! I was always sure that they lived somewhere in the green depths."

"But of course it is quite impossible," said Lady Brenda, who was still incredulous.

"Nothing is impossible," answered

the earnest voice of Pascal. He was sitting at a distance from the rest, apparently lost in a reverie, a look of wonderful peace upon his face.

"Really," returned Lady Brenda. "I always thought everybody knew that a great many things are altogether out of the question."

"Unusual things seem impossible until they happen," answered the man of learning. "What could seem more impossible to a human mind than the creation of this world? What more impossible than its destruction?"

"That is true. But we have grown used to the world as we see it and know it. There are changes imaginable in the world which look far less probable than the final catastrophe—the last day, as people call it."

"There are things beyond this earth which none of you can ever imagine, and yet they have a very real existence."

"The creations of the mind are as real as the manifestations of matter," said Lionardo.

"Yes," assented Lady Brenda, "because they can be printed in books, painted on canvas, or carved in stone. Then they become real things."

"Pardon me. That is not what makes them real. Many great books were handed down for centuries before even writing was invented, and they had a tremendous influence over the human race."

"But words are almost things after all, and if one learns them by heart they are just like books."

"What are words?" asked the artist. "They are symbols of thought. Letters only represent words by convention, and are symbols of symbols. The reality lies in the ideas which all these symbols call up to countless generations of men who hear the words or see the letters. The idea is then the reality, and the material part of a picture or a book is the vehicle, not affecting the idea but communicating it more or less correctly and completely to men."

"But if a picture is not a thing—I grant you the matter of the book—where does the painter's merit lie?"

"In knowing how to convey to you what he sees, just as the poet's skill consists in making his thoughts pass through your brain. The poet's ideas live longer because the symbols which convey them can be reproduced and are used by everybody. The artist's symbols are his own, and no one else can use them in the same way to express the same idea."

"We were talking about the Sirens," remarked Heine suddenly. "If we could only find their symbols, as you call them——"

"Music is not a symbol. It is an ever living reality," said Chopin. "It is a reality that makes itself felt without being always defined."

"Your music is your thought," replied Lionardo. "You gave it shape by your skill, and thus transmitted it to others. Therefore it is the symbol of your ideas."

"The expression, not the symbol. There is a vast difference between the two."

"The symbol is the means of expressing," argued the artist. "A sequence of symbols constitutes a whole expression."

"Not in music. The written notes are the symbols. The strain of living music is the expression. Otherwise you would have a right to say that I derive as much pleasure from looking over a page of music, because I know how it would sound, as I get from actually hearing the same music performed."

"That is true," said Lionardo thoughtfully. "Is music after all the greatest of the arts? Perhaps it is."

"No," answered Chopin. "As great as the rest, but not greater. But it is more real, because in music the expression is inseparable from the idea. You cannot imagine a prose translation of music. And yet there are prose translations of poems, which are still capable of moving the heart; and there

are copies and drawings of pictures and statues, which still give some part of the pleasure a man would feel in seeing the original. You either hear music, or you do not hear it. There is no compromise for the uninitiated, like a translation, nor any substitute for those who cannot enjoy it directly, such as copies or drawings."

"Music is like action," said Cæsar. "What is the description of a great deed, compared with the deed itself? What is an action that is only thought of and never performed? Nothing, unless it furnish a little matter for speculation, and inquiring into its possibility."

"And love," suggested the King, "what is it, until a man feels it? It is like music that has never been sung."

"Music is love, and hate, and peace, and war, and all great passions and great deeds," replied Chopin. "It is the only art which can express everything that is infinitely noble and grand, and yet which need never define anything."

"Sir," said Johnson, "music suggests that which cannot be expressed, nor defined either, by any art with which man is now acquainted. Nevertheless, it is instructive to observe that those pleasing aspirations, which harmony is so eminently capable of inspiring in the human heart, are only awakened in certain hearers whose organization is especially fitted to receive a musical impression. To my mind, sir, music is not even a cheerful noise; but I once heard certain solemn music played on French horns at Rochester, and the impression kind upon me was of a melancholy kind."

"If you were affected by the sound of a French horn," remarked Heine, "it is impossible to say what you might feel if you heard a Siren."

"We shall see, sir," replied the Doctor curtly.

"I hope so," said Gwendolen. "Do you not think we could go about now?" she asked, turning to Augustus.

"Yes," he answered. "It will be

safer, too. There is something brewing down there in the south-east."

He whistled to the men forward to mind the jibs, and he put the helm down. A man came aft immediately to manage the sheet, as the cutter's head came up to the wind. Augustus expected to see him start with astonishment at the sight of the strange guests. Then glancing around he saw that they had disappeared.

"Let her go a little free of the wind," said Heine's voice, as the breeze caught the sail and the vessel went over on to the port tack. The sailor instinctively obeyed the order, allowing a few feet more of the sheet to run through the blocks, but he turned his head sharply round, and stared at Augustus.

"Excuse me, sir, but did you give that order?" he asked, in queer tones.

"No—well—it's all right, Jameson. You can make fast. And keep your eye on that stuff down there," added Augustus, pointing to the clouds that were piling up over the Calabrian hills.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the man, somewhat reassured. He went forward again, and as he disappeared, the figures of the dead men became once more clearly visible in the moonlight.

"You nearly frightened the fellow out of his wits," said Augustus with a laugh. "I thought that when you had disappeared you were gone altogether, and would not have made yourself heard."

"We are never gone," replied the poet. "But the power of your currents is diminishing. You yourself will soon no longer see us, nor hear us. I wonder that my voice could still reach that man who is not in the same chain as you."

"Are you really going? So soon?" asked Diana, in sorrowful surprise.

"Very soon—too soon," answered Heine sadly; and again that deep and melancholy sigh swelled, hovered on the breeze, and floated away over the

rippling water, as though it were itself a spirit burdened with grief, that sought rest and found not where to lay its head.

For a long time there was silence. As the yacht ran further from the land the night-wind lost its strength, and the vessel moved slowly in her course. Almost unconsciously Augustus steered for the three sister islets. The moon's rays caught the uneven surfaces of the rocks and made them stand out of the white distance. Though the cutter seemed to be hardly moving, the islands came nearer and nearer and gradually grew more distinct. At last the sails hung idly down, flat and unstirred by any breath. The shore was now not a hundred yards distant, and the yacht had scarcely any way on her. At less than twenty yards from the beach she stopped, and lay motionless in the perfect calm.

The shore was low and flat, covered with dark wet sand in which the moonlight found tiny points of reflection that glistened like diamonds. In the background, and at both ends, the rocks rose up in weird irregular shapes, full of deep black shadows. A little way down the beach a row of jagged timbers stuck out of the sand, —all that remained of some poor fishing-vessel wrecked long ago.

But as the eyes of all on board gazed at the quiet scene, three figures grew up out of the misty moonlight. Three white women sat grouped together on a projecting boulder, three women wonderfully fair, and each so like the other, that their faces were as one face seen from three different aspects. Their hair, golden even in the moonlight, seemed wet with the sea-water, and their lips were red with life. As they looked out seaward their deep eyes gleamed like a constellation of soft southern stars. One of them held in her hands a coral pipe with two stems, another a tiny lyre made from a conch shell, and the third clasped her ivory fingers together and sat between the others,

her lips just parted as though her song were trembling to come forth.

"The Sirens!" said Gwendolen under her breath. But no one else spoke, and all was still.

And so, as the white winged vessel lay motionless in the enchanted moonlight, those three pale faces were turned upwards, and from the mysterious lips there issued a wild and changing harmony, and words of a half-forgotten speech, which by some strange magic were yet wholly understood by those who heard.

"The moonlight bathes the sea,
And the ripples wash the sand :
The song of our hearts goes free
Down the shelving silver strand.
Neither goddesses are we, nor women,
Nor angels, nor spirits of death :
We are maidens of evil omen,
And we breathe the sea spray for our breath.

"The gods love us not in heaven,
The souls of drowned men in hell
Curse us, from morn till even,
For the songs we sing so well.
We are neither alive nor dead,
We know not of death nor of life,
But the life of man is our bread,
And the tears of widowed wife.

When the Mother of all, before the light,
Laboured to bring forth gods to Chaos,
Wrapped in the pall of ancient night,
No mother had we in her bosom to lay us,
To dandle and fondle, caress us and nurse us,
For we sprang out of moonlight and soft sea mist,
And we sing that the sailors may love us and curse us,
And die in the song of the lips they have kissed.

"In the thick darkness the ages moaned
When the Mother travailed, the shapeless god,
The awful father Chaos, groaned,
Shaking the vaults of space as he trod.
Then the Mother laid hold on the pillars of night
And bowed herself and shrieked aloud,
Till the firmament rocked beneath her might
And split, and was rent into streamers of cloud.
The broad black waste of space was torn,
The arch of heaven was burst to the day,
The sun leapt up, and the gods were born,
And Chaos the father passed away.

"But gods and men have bodies and souls,
And they live and they know that their lives are sweet,

While the dear sun shines and the blue tide
rolls,

While the heart is full and the pulses beat,
The beasts of the forest, the flocks on the
mountain,

The bright-winged birds and the fish in
the deep,

All drink of the water of life's clear foun-
tain—

All die at the last and are lost in sleep."

And now the clouds, that had
hidden the moon for a few moments,
disappeared, and showed her far down
upon the western horizon. Her beams
fell full upon the white, super-
natural beauty of the sisters' faces.
Suddenly their song changed, and twin-
ing their smooth arms about one
another's necks they moved slowly
forward till they stood on the edge of
the sand, so that the gently rippling
water washed their gleaming feet.
And thus again they sang.

"Hail, summer's moon, pale with soft deathly
love!

The silent stars, thy messengers and slaves,
Thy faithful linkmen in the roads above,
Show thee the paths that lead o'er dead
men's graves:

O'er the great grave of all, through which
they drove

Their raking craft, mid storms and lashing
waves,

Hither, whence dying gales on languid wing
Waft seaward through the night the song
we sing.

"Come, weary mariners! Come, tired souls,
Faint with the watch and labour of the sea,
With tugging at the oar where mad surf rolls,
With staring for the light upon the lee,
Worn out with waking when the watch-bell
tolls—

Here is the land you seek! Rest and be
free!

Slack sheet and halyard, furl and stow your
sails,
Smooth gleams the harbour, and the storm-
wind fails.

"Long have you toiled upon the hard oak-seat,
Your limbs are stiff and aching with the
blast,

Your hands are cramped with grasping the
wet sheet,

Your eyes are dim with watching from the
mast

For some faint light amidst the driving sleet!
Now sinks the storm, now is the tempest
past,

Run the long ship securely on the sand,
Stretch your strong limbs and leap upon
the land!

"The moon is low, the heavy hours that toiled
So slow about the dial of the night,

When wave yawned back from wave, and
hissed and boiled,

Bathe now their crystal coronets in light.
Poseidon's trooping monsters now have coiled
Their slimy length to sleep, far out of
sight.

To distant depths subsides the storm-god's
roar,

And tuneful ripples tinkle on the shore.

"Think not, as o'er the swinging ash you bend,
These rocks too rough, or this wet strand
too cold!

Dread not the reef, as with long sweep you
send

Your ship abeach! Nor keel, nor laden
hold

Shall grate upon one sea-shell to offend

The smooth long planks: the deep, sweet
sand shall fold

Your tired bark as in a sea-bird's nest,
And on our velvet shore your limbs shall
rest.

"Waste not your looks on shadows, in our
faces

Read the sweet signs and oaths of woman's
love!

Read, that these hearts are yours, these sea-
born graces,—

These lips of ours that kissed the gods
above—

This golden hair, tangled in misty laces

Fine as the Lydian web Arachne wove—
All yours! Love's kisses and entrancing

powers,

Yours! and, in being yours, we make you
ours!"

The moon already touched the low
sea-line, and the great shadow of the
yacht's sails fell upon the darkening
shore. Suddenly there was a stir in
the water, and the long, dark shape of
a strangely fashioned vessel, dim and
indistinct amid the half-light, loomed
up from the water, gliding swiftly and
making noiseless circles in the sea, as
though propelled by an unseen power.
Augustus felt an icy chill run through
his frame. A cool breeze began to
fill the sails of the cutter, and carried
her slowly away from the island.
Chard grasped the helm mechanically,
gazing back at the faces of the Siren
sisters, and at the moving shadow of
the ship, straining his ears to catch
the last words of their song. Once
more their voices rose, full of a fateful,
passionate temptation, mingled with a
fierce and horrible joy.

"The dark ship looms in the brightness
 above us,
 The long keel grates on the deadly strand,
 The strong white bodies of men that would
 love us

Leap from the bow to the soft wet sand !
 Our arms go round them, our cold lips
 wound them,

Our sweet song lulls them to rest and sleep.
 With our breath, and the mist of our breath,
 we have drowned them,
 Just as the moon sinks into the deep.

"We have silver lips, and hearts of lead,
 To kiss and caress till the sailor is dead,
 To soothe him and breathe on his curly head,
 To drain his blood till his soul is sped,
 To blow the sea-foam o'er the dead man's bed,
 When the stars are dark and the moon is fled
 From the deep sea."

The wild strains died away like a
 dirge on the cool air as the yacht ran
 swiftly forward. The moon was gone,
 but another light was on the water.
 The east was already blushing, and
 the fair Dawn Maiden scattered her
 rose leaves along the path of the coming
 sun.

In their deep chairs, Lady Brenda,
 Gwendolen, and Diana sat motionless
 and pale, while Augustus, paler even
 than they, stood upright and held the
 helm. But the shades of the dead
 men were gone, and the living were
 alone together in the cool peace of the
 stealing twilight.

THE END.

NOTE.

"An Idyl of Ischia," in the last number of this Magazine, should have been specified
 as a translation from the Danish of Herre Vilhelm Bergsøe.

END OF VOL. LVI.



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